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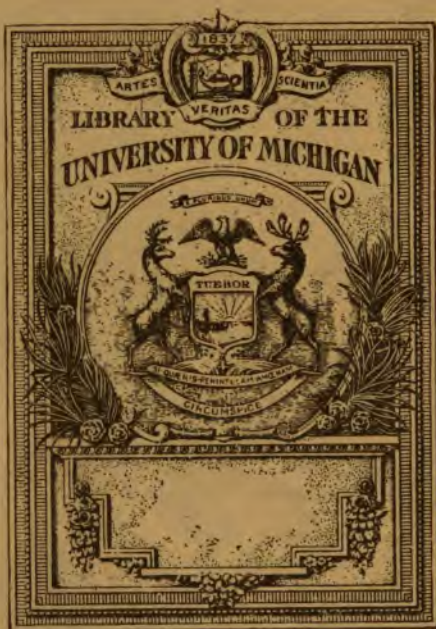
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JAPANESE LIFE, LOVE, AND LEGEND.



A Visit to the Empire of the "Rising Sun."

FROM "LE JAPON PITTORESQUE" OF MAURICE DUBARD, 1845—

BY
WILLIAM CONN.

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JAPANESE LIFE, LOVE, AND LEGEND.

CHAPTER I.

VOYAGE FROM LORIENT TO YOKOHAMA.

Departure from Lorient—The Madonna of Larmor—Saigon
—Disagreeable Surprise—Expedition to Tonquin—
Agreeable Surprise—Shanghai—Yokohama.

WHEN we slipped our moorings from Lorient and put to sea, bound for Cochin-China, we had no idea of a visit to the delightful country of Japan, and naturally, still less of a visit that turned out to be so memorable for its romantic incidents, which, as the reader will perceive when he has followed them to their *dénouement*, could not have been anticipated had we been ever so familiar with Japanese life and character.

On parting from our native shores, the weather was anything but propitious ; for unbroken cloud darkened land and water and the roadstead was hidden in mist, and as we passed close under the headland of La Peirrière, where our friends were

B

gathered—mothers, sisters, and others who had become perhaps, still more interesting—we could only dimly see the group waving with their kerchiefs a final adieu. We soon steamed out of sight, with heavy hearts and, indeed, some tearful eyes. Then we turned the little islet of St. Michel, ran past the hamlet of Kernevel on the right, and coming in view of the village of Larmor, that spot so highly venerated by all true Bretons on account of its Madonna, we prepared to salute with three guns the tutelary saint, in obedience to a duty observed from time immemorial, the lady being then bound to watch over the safety of the ship and her crew till the voyage was completed—a devotion in which every true seaman has implicit faith so soon as he hears the booming of the cannon.

The charming village where I had passed so many happy days when sunbeams flooded its dazzling white beach, and where I had often lounged on fête days, watching the lusty lads and buxom lassies frolicking in their holiday garb, how sad was its aspect to-day in cloud, in lifelessness, and on parting!

Our voyage, now begun on the open sea, presented nothing worthy of remark. Life on board a ship of war is too strictly in accordance with the regulations of the service to admit of notable incidents, and there were none to record. We put in at Algiers, then at Port Said, Aden, Point-de-Galles, and Singapore, not as tourists do, but as officers bound to execute orders within a prescribed time.

At the beginning of autumn we arrived at Saigon, where we had to revictual, and here we were most disagreeably surprised to find that we were expected for an expedition into Upper Cochin-China. I do not desire to revive sad souvenirs, and shall therefore say nothing of the tragic story of ten months' duration, an expedition in which our ranks were cruelly thinned by the enemy's balls and the fiery climate. Then an order suddenly came to proceed to Japan, and the sailors soon forgot their sufferings in their unbounded joy; for we were going to see that interesting country so extolled by all voyagers. And in truth, when once seen, it is a land never to be forgotten.

But we were obliged to go first to the coast of China and show our flag there. We passed some time at Shanghai, where the French colony warmly welcomed our officers, and we joined in some exhilarating sport on the banks of the Imperial Canal, feeling all the pleasure of meeting our own countrymen at three thousand leagues from home, and, after wonderful feats of sporting, we again put to sea in the middle of November.

Our destination was Yokohama ; and we made on passing a short call at Nagasaki, saluted the Martyr's Rock, and paid a flying visit to the porcelain shops, where we were struck with admiration on beholding the colossal specimens of ceramic art, the productions of this province. But our attention was too much diverted by the bright eyes and pretty faces of the fair dealers to appreciate then at its just value a work of art.

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But then it was quite natural that Art should yield to Nature. Indeed, this "Land of the Rising Sun" seems to attract one like a beautiful maiden. The visitor feels himself drawn irresistibly towards its smiling and varied landscapes. Everything conduces to the attraction. The language even, so harmonious and sonorous, is music compared with the nasal Chinese, especially when warbled by the lips of bright, lively maidens.

A young officer shared my enthusiasm. Finding the language not difficult to learn, we quickly resolved to master it, and at once began studying together with the assiduity with which we had always worked together, and were soon gratified to find that we were making sensible progress; still, with a view to being more assured of the fact, we tested our highly-esteemed acquisition in compliments to the young ladies, who received them with shouts of laughter, replying in their silvery voices:

"Oki ni arignato, idjin-san." *

The experiment was amusing, but not conclusive.

We traversed the inland sea—a real lake bordered with smiling villages along its banks—passed before Shimonoséki, which recalled to my mind the grievous incidents of the conflict of 1867, so fatal to us Europeans, stayed a few hours at the delightful little port of Kôbé, and, at last, came to anchor in the roadstead of Yokohama.

* "Many thanks, foreign gentlemen."

CHAPTER II.

YOKOHAMA.

Situation and Aspect of Yokohama—Visit to Yedo—Meeting an Old Comrade—The Ruins of the Tycoon's Palace—Varied Attractions of Yedo.

THE name itself of Yokohama calls up in my mind associations that dwell for ever in the memory. To the stranger there is nothing very remarkable in this city: there is neither in its history nor in its present aspect anything that would mark it out for special attention. It was merely a fine village formerly on the Gulf of Yedo, not far from the highway of the Tōkaidō, which divides Nippon into North and South. But Europeans have availed themselves of its position—advantageous from a geographical and topographical point of view—to make it the centre of their political intercourse and commercial operations, and have accordingly raised here a city without much regularity, but, in being thus favoured by its situation and the nature of the surrounding country, one at least fanciful and attractive.

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The view from its capacious roadstead, constantly filled with the busy shipping of Europe, embraces a fine panorama, within which, a little beyond the port, rise over the city the charming villas of the Tobe hill; and whilst in the distance Fousi-yama rears its snow-capped head above the clouds, representing in this grand picture the proud and ancient Nippon, a long column of coal smoke, an emblem of modern importations, wings its way from the steam boilers towards the renovated capital of civilised Japan.

I hardly knew what was the kind of loadstone drawing my heart so powerfully towards these enchanting shores; it was throbbing with impatience, but, as is invariably the case, when we have long cherished in our imagination a longed-for object, the moment of realisation comes with a disillusion :

All things that are,
Are with more spirit chased than enjoyed.*

But then it rained, and the gray sky cast a sullen gloom over the roadstead and the city. Under these inauspicious circumstances, a countryman of ours, an old resident of Japan, came to look for us and rescued us in time from our disheartening mood.

Well knowing that a sojourn of many months here would admit of my gratifying my curiosity at my leisure, I did not, in the manner of modern "globe-trotters," boil with impatience "to do" the

* *Merchant of Venice.*

whole in the shortest space of time possible, who, like the heroes of Jules Verne, would, if they could, compass the globe

Swifter than the wandering moon.*

I therefore traced out for myself a well-considered plan; but without actually making an itinerary, I intended visiting at first Yedo, then, probably urged by a humour to wander a little, I thought I should like to make an excursion into the interior and as far as the international treaty would permit a foreigner; to see Nikkô, the country of magnificent trees, venerable from age, and of ancient forests, possessing all the attraction of the mysterious unknown; then Fousi-yama, one of the highest mountains of the world, with its vast imposing crater. Finally, I wished to see Yokosta and its arsenal, Kamakura and its *Dai-bouts*—the colossal statue of Buddha in bronze—all these enchanting spots so often pictured in my imagination, reserving Yokohama for the final visit.

But what is the use, after all, of making plans? I have seen most of the places I had proposed to visit and others besides, but I saw them all later, and at a moment and under circumstances I was far from anticipating on my arrival.

As soon as I had my liberty, I set out for Yedo, the ancient city of the Tycoon,† the

* *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

† The military emperor who had usurped the power, and from which he was driven by the Mikado in 1868, the Mikado being the hereditary emperor of Japan, "Son of the Sun."

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immense metropolis wherein was recently displayed all the pompous luxury of the usurpers, and where every year all the nobility of the "Empire of the Rising Sun" used to come in grand state to render homage to the first subject of the realm, whilst its legitimate sovereign, the heir to all the glory of Japanese chivalry, the Mikado, was obliged to hide his diminished head in the shade of his own sacred palace at Kiôto.

Yedo, since raised to the capital of the empire, the residence of his majesty the Mikado, where through the influence of Europe he has been re-instated after many centuries of exiled sovereigns, is the centre of every reform and every novel institution introduced into the country by foreigners and duly patronised by the new Government.

And here France is worthily represented by a military mission composed of chosen officers, charged with the creation of an army, the instruction of the troops, and military organisation.

The Japanese, happily prepared by their national education, which is quite in a chivalrous spirit, have most readily adapted themselves to the numerous modifications so suddenly introduced into the profession of arms. The results hitherto obtained are surprising, and it is not without pride that we see these brave little soldiers manœuvring in a manner that reflects credit on their instructors.

One of my comrades, one of the oldest members of this mission, hospitably placed at my disposal in the most cordial manner his house and his good offices. We visited in company the curiosities of

this immense Japanese city, its temples, its *yasuki* (dwelling-houses), its gardens, its gay shops of trinkets and fancy articles, its promenades, its theatres, its innumerable petty tea-houses and pleasure resorts, which might be likened to aviaries of warbling and prattling birds, and of which we have nothing in France that could give the least idea. All these novelties well occupied us for a whole week.

Fearing to become wearisome to my obliging companion by examining now everything minutely, I wished to take a bird's-eye view at first and return afterwards, to study alone and at my leisure, as profitably as I could, what this admirable country presented to my view. We therefore paid a flying visit to the *Shiro*, a triple enclosure of granite, in the centre of which stood the Palace of the Tycoon, which was burnt in one of those terrible conflagrations that consume entire cities in a few hours, the most fearful scourge of Japan ; then the *Shiba*, the tomb of the Shôguns*—those heroes who have tyrannised over the country for centuries with an iron hand ; then the temple of *Asaksa*, celebrated for the miracles of its gods, its myriads of pigeons, and the archery-grounds surrounding ; and at last the Wéno gardens, where still lie exposed the blackened, charred remains, cribbled with ball and grape-shot, of what was once the first sanctuary of the empire, and where the long usurpation of the Tykoons, those modern *maires du palais*, was as

* The word Shôgun signifies general-in-chief ; this was the appellation of the Tykoons before they usurped the power.

completely demolished in the sanguinary drama of 1868.

This spot still presents to the eye a sinister aspect, and the imagination easily conjures up a picture of dire significance. The final bloody assault seems to have ended only yesterday, and as one glances around, he fancies he still sees, on the fallen stones and mutilated trunks of fine old trees, fearful evidence in gory stains of the formidable last struggle of the doughty daimios, in which the ancient Japanese chivalry was annihilated; and yet within a few steps, there may be said to be a continuous fête. If the Government of the Mikado, immersed in the confusion of State affairs, has not yet effaced everywhere the traces of the convulsion, the Japanese, of all nations the most light-hearted, have not long worn their mourning, and the day after the calamity, began to raise elegant little habitations by the hundred on the ground recently encumbered by the fallen warriors, where now attractive *mous'-mê** are constantly entertaining loungers with tiny cups of tea and the notes of their *chamicen*,† whilst these, probably for want of a more serious occupation, are sipping the beverage and contemplating the coquetry of the serving damsels.

* *Mous'-mê* signifies a young girl.

† A three-stringed guitar.

CHAPTER III.

YOKOHAMA.

**The Benten—The Courteousness of the Japanese Dealers—
Marcel—An Indulgent Father—An Amiable Family—
Interesting Acquaintances.**

BEFORE continuing uninterruptedly my excursions and my studies, I was obliged to return to Yokohama, to take orders from my commanding officer, and settle some matters of the service. I learnt, on arriving, that my presence would be required for more than a week, and I availed myself of this inopportune interval to begin visiting the various curiosity shops in my leisure moments, which, on account of the great number of foreigners here, are plentiful, and the best-furnished of Japan.

Two fine parallel streets—the one called Bentendôri,* the other Hontcho-dôri—are entirely occupied by dealers. It is here where are seen in such profusion the inexhaustible varieties of nicknacks that cost so much, and which are, in due course,

* Dôri signifies street.

seen displayed with so much pride in good houses in France among certain collections.

The Japanese generally, and particularly the Japanese dealers, are so affable that one may come and go as often as he pleases in order to examine, bargain, handle, and disturb the curiosities displayed, without ever buying anything or thereby putting them in an ill humour. They will receive you always, whatever amount of unprofitable trouble you may give, with the same politeness and the same smile; they will offer you quite as graciously the miniature cup of tea, a custom scrupulously observed by every respectable tradesman, whether he is the richer or not for your visit.

When you have made your bargain with the dealer—a proceeding often long and difficult—he becomes your friend. You may then enter his house at any hour of the day and make yourself quite at home; he will offer you his tobacco, and pour out for you his tea; he will talk with you about your business, your family, your country, the news of the day, and politics; but he will rarely condescend to the obtrusive manner of a European shopkeeper to praise his goods and press them on you. His stock is exposed for sale; you may examine it, buy what you like, and make the price if you think proper to do so; but he will hardly ever say anything to induce you to open your purse. He is often quite an artist, and sometimes a philosopher.

With this encouragement, the promenade of the Bente is quite attractive, and, so far as I was con-

cerned, I took constant delight in lounging through this immense museum of a kind full of novelty for me, where, while satisfying my curiosity, I could make such important progress in my knowledge of the spoken language. As often as the regulations of the service permitted, my fellow-student in the language joined me in exploring the shops. He was the most agreeable companion one could desire. Young in years and spirits, well-informed, open-hearted, and refined, a true son of the soil of wild Brittany, there was in him something of the melancholy of his misty and poetic land. His name was Marcel. A mutual sympathy had spontaneously united us; then the friendship, the growth of daily intercourse and duties in common, had become so cordial, that the sailors soon designated us among themselves as "the Japanese brothers."

One day we haggled a long time over a little box of gold lacquer. This object was exquisite; it strongly tempted my friend, who wished to send it to his sister; but necessity compelled him to weigh his generosity against the official instalments of his pay, and the dealer being resolute in not abating anything, we were obliged to leave without striking a bargain.

We returned, however, in the evening; for a disappointed buyer, like a disappointed lover, often returns to the proximity of the attraction, as if a glimpse alone at the idol afforded some comforting compensation.

A young girl, childlike in appearance, whom he had not noticed in the morning, was putting in

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order the articles displaced by the curious, as one usually does before closing the shop.

On entering, after the usual salutation :

"Well now?" exclaimed Marcel to the old dealer, with a look of inquiry.

The latter understanding the question, "It is impossible, sir," he replied ; "the box you wish for is very fine, and I would rather keep it than dispose of it at a low price. Take this one ; it is bigger, richer, and, at the same time, not so dear."

The object offered in exchange was certainly very brilliant, but in execrably bad taste.

"I would not take it at any price," said Marcel disdainfully. "I want to make a present to my sister. I have already decided that it should be the box chosen this morning, and not any other."

The young girl, during this altercation, had suspended her occupation to listen to what was going on.

"The sister of the *idjin-san** is a grand lady," she was heard to say, as if speaking to somebody invisible to Marcel and myself.

The sound of this infantine voice made my friend turn round just as he was going to open his purse to avoid any more haggling.

"A grand lady? No, my bonny lass, but a darling little girl about your age, and almost as pretty as you are."

Surprised by this compliment, the first perhaps she had received, the young *mous'-mé* regarded

* The foreigner.

Marcel with astonishment, almost with a frightened look; then taking the bone of contention in her hand, she drew near her father. Then might be heard a very animated conversation in suppressed voices between the two actors in this private scene—the daughter, with the discontented and rebellious tone of a spoilt child, seemed to be remonstrating with the father, who, with a slight shrug of the shoulders, manifested his disapproval. The young lady pouted and waited.

“O-Hana!” he exclaimed, in a tone of reproach.

The young maiden was already before us with bright colour mantling in her cheek.

“There it is,” she said to my friend, holding out to him the coveted object, “take it!”

“How much, my dear young lady?”

“I know nothing about it; but the price you have proposed to my father is quite fair—I am sure of that.”

Marcel looked first at the girl, and then at the object, felt embarrassed, and hesitated.

“Take it now,” she insisted decisively. “It is for your sister.”

The old man, noticing our astonishment, reassured us: “The bargain is made now, have no scruples about it. O-Hana would have it so in her own way. She is my daughter, the child of my old age; it is she who orders, and I obey.”

When we desired to express our thanks to the amiable young lady, she had suddenly disappeared.

Instead of continuing his promenade with me

as in the preceding evening, instead of wandering hour after hour among the motley crowd, so merry and jocular and babbling, animating the streets under a constellation of paper lanterns that give so picturesque an aspect to Japanese cities at night, Marcel separated from me without explanation. At midnight, when I came on board, I found the port-light of his cabin still lighted. From all appearances, sleep seemed to have been very slow in coming to weigh down my friend's eyelids, and when this was accomplished his senses were by no means "steeped in forgetfulness," for fantastic dreams danced in his head with delightful confusion till morning. In the indistinct interval between dreams and contemplation, he clearly saw an admirable youthful head, the delicate, smooth profile of a young girl, whose image, on rising, haunted his imagination, and this he quite naturally associated with the recent impression of the pretty little dealer. A few lines in writing which, on getting up, I found upon my table, enlightened me on the interesting situation.

"I am ashore, come and join me," was the end of this hastily-written note.

"Join him! But where on earth was I to find him? How thoughtlessly simple! Why didn't he give himself the trouble to inform me? He knew well enough where he was going, without the inconvenience of hesitating, no doubt. Every one was expected to know; a lover thinks it superfluous to explain what is to him so obvious."

I anticipated the hour at which people are astir

generally on the promenade of the Benten. I entered in passing a few shops, inquiring for the little Japanese brother: no one had seen him, I was certain of that. Then I proceeded without delay to the quarters of the old dealer. On approaching the shop, sure enough, he was in its vicinity.

"I have been waiting here for you," he said.

We were within a few paces of the shop. O-Hana, coquettishly dressed out, was showing with childlike grace to the wondering eyes of a few recently-arrived foreigners, the treasures of her glass cases.

As soon as she saw us, she called out to the dealer: "Father, these are the foreigners that were here yesterday."

Then with a gracious smile she turned to salute us:

"*Konnitchi-wa idjin-san*" (good morning to the foreign gentlemen).

The old man, occupied apparently in making up his accounts of the preceding evening, raised his head, looked at us under his large spectacles, gave us a slight bow with a peevish air, and resumed his work without saying a word. Marcel stood embarrassed with a feeling of being intrusive, and under the impression that, though he had a friend in Mademoiselle O-Hana, he had, at the same time, in the master of the house an irreconcilable enemy.

O-Hana, pensive and absent, hardly replied to the questions of the customers; a nervous and

abrupt movement in the demeanour of the young girl indicated a growing ill-humour ; she glanced anxiously with her black eyes at the placid countenance of the dealer and then at my friend with an expression of slight melancholy. Then, as if irritated at her father's silence, the maiden suddenly came up and, taking us by the hand, led us to the old man.

"*Gomen nasaimashi*" (pray excuse me), she said. "Seat yourselves here and wait a moment." Then calling her mother :

"Okka-san, Okka-san (mother, mother), bring the tea."

During this attention, the amateurs of *bibelots*, offended, no doubt, at being so unceremoniously abandoned, had taken their departure.

"*Sayo-nara*" (*au revoir*), said merrily the young girl. "They are English. There is nothing in my father's shop good enough for them."

The indulgent mother had quickly appeared to her daughter's summons. Holding in one hand the tea-pot, a doll's tea-pot in fact, and such as is used by the Japanese, she presented us with the other, bowing very low, a tiny cup resting delicate tray of plaited rice-straw.

The Japanese houses, perfect jewels of work, are delightfully clean ; the walls are covered with pretty paper, stretched over a wooden frame ; the floor is covered with tatami mats, at least three inches thick, on which whereon no one would ever venture to tread with a boot. In the shops frequented by the

tatami are replaced by planks, scrupulously clean, after having been washed and scrubbed every morning. There is, however, a reserved space in the apartment, raised about a foot above the level of the floor, where the *tatami* are symmetrically arranged together, covering about three or four square yards. It is here, around the *tchibatchi*, a kind of *brasero*, where pipes are lighted and water continuously kept hot for tea-making, that the members of the family seat themselves with their neighbours and friends till the close of the day. It is here where O-Hana had led us by the hand, giving us thus to understand that she wished to consider us as friends of the family.

We cordially thanked Okka-san, sipped the fragrant beverage she had offered us, complimenting her at the same time on the pleasing ways of her charming little daughter, and I declared to the head of the family that, after having visited all the shops in the Benten, there was not one that I liked so well as his.

Every one seemed to be highly pleased, and yet a look of distrust still lingered, I fancied, in the dealer's countenance.

"Show us all your fine things," I exclaimed. "I will begin buying a lot of *bibelots* at once, and you can fix the price yourself, without fearing I shall offer anything less."

This declaration quite brightened the mercenary old man's face, and he began setting about showing us his treasures.

O-Hana, kneeling before the *tchibatchi*, with

her hands spread over the burning fuel covered with a layer of cinder, watched all our movements with a dreamy, preoccupied air. The father, mounted on a stool, was handing to me various objects I pointed out to him, which, on examining, I laid down on the *tatami*, by the side of the young girl. I noticed that she scrutinised some of them very attentively and put them aside. As soon as I had made a preliminary selection, I saw that it would be necessary to reject at least the half, unless I would empty my purse at one stroke ; then, whilst her father was occupied at the other end of the shop, O-Hana took some of them up and pointed out to me the defects that had escaped my notice, and then withdrew them from the lot I had at first chosen.

“ *Korewa mina ikoura ?* ” (how much the lot ?) I demanded of the proprietor.

He raised leisurely his enormous spectacles to his nose, surveyed this portion of his artistic treasures which he was going to part with, and exclaimed :

“ *Tak' san !* ” (there are a great many of them).

Then taking the calculating instrument, the *soroban*, which every Japanese uses, he began going through a course of the most grotesque pantomime ; he first held up the instrument, passed his fingers through his gray hair, sighed deeply again and again, looked at his daughter with an air of resignation, and then growled out some price in a

tone that rendered it unintelligible, but which seemed to signify he was prepared to march to the gallows.

"*Iorochii!*" joyfully screamed out the maiden, clapping her hands with childish delight. "Very well, it is settled: *San djou go mai, ni bou isshiou*,* thirty-five *rio*, two *bou* and a quarter."

I thought we were going to have another scene similar to that of the preceding evening. I was going to speak, when the shopkeeper, with a serious face, interrupted.

"Listen," he said. "O-Hana may say what she likes, but I shall not bate a *tempo*."†

I then understood that he had named the very lowest price, and that the daughter had simply taken the father at his word.

After this time, Marcel and I hardly ever bought anything of consequence elsewhere. When O-Hana's father could not supply us with what we wanted, the good man procured it from his fellow-dealers, and disposed of it to us at cost price. We became henceforth friends of the house. Marcel, who was younger and more enthusiastic than I, was particularly appreciated; rarely a day passed without his calling to while away a few hours with these good people.

"Why didn't you come here yesterday?" anxiously demanded O-Hana, when he had one

* About £2 14s. 5d.

† Copper money; a *tempo* is rather less than a half-penny.

day failed in his customary visit. "I was sad the whole evening, and the night seemed as if it would never end. You promised you would teach me the French language, and tell me everything that was going on in your fine country, and now I am ready to begin."

His dear little friend was so pretty and so *naïve*, and her name—which signified flower in Japanese—was so melodious to pronounce, that Marcel found her invitations irresistible. He came there every day; he came in the morning and in the evening, without taking thought that, however delightful it was to find himself there, he was creating a habit that would be, at some future time, painful and inconvenient to suppress. Already deep in love, he had quite forgotten his projects of exploring the country. So far as I was concerned, not having the same motive to remain at Yokohama, I did not abandon my excursions; but, wearied with the defection of my travelling companion, I put off from day to day the execution of my plan.

The whole family was presented to us in due course: O-Sada-san, the elder sister of O-Hana, lately married; Ouyeno, her husband, an *employé* in the Japanese custom-house, playfully called by his sister-in-law Danna-san (the gentleman), because he affected European manners in a way exaggerated and ridiculous. They took us all over the house and the little interior garden—a decided mark of confidence. One Sunday they took us to

the little *yasiki* of the Mississippi.* The kind attention of this amiable family quite moved us, and the intimacy favoured an attachment to them that became stronger every day.

* A remarkably fertile valley in the neighbourhood of Yokohama named thus by the Americans.

CHAPTER IV.

YEDO AND YOKOHAMA REVISITED.

A Trip to Yedo and Return to Yokohama—The Family in the Benten—How O-Hana learnt French and Marcel Japanese—Effect of the Revolution—Pleasant Evenings *en famille*.

NOTWITHSTANDING the agreeable society I enjoyed in the Benten of Yokohama, I was obliged to return to Yedo; for many invitations called me there, as well as my recently-found friend. A grand review was to take place, in the course of a few days, before the Mikado in person, and then a presentation of colours to the regiments of the guard. This military parade, however attractive generally to Europeans, was not sufficiently so, to induce Marcel to follow me. After having attempted to persuade him, but to no purpose, I was obliged to set off alone.

When I came back at the end of a week, I found the Breton madcap plunged deeper than ever in the study of Japanese. O-Hana was his tutor, *bien entendu*, and he taught her French at

the same time : he was satisfied with the progress, but a little piqued at discovering that she advanced much quicker than he in their studies.

Winter was now approaching ; the days were becoming short and the evenings long. It began to feel cold already, and the perambulating dealers, with their innumerable stores *al fresco*, which gave so much animation to the street during the fine summer nights, now began shivering at sunset, and took it into their heads to retire at this early hour to the shelter of their homes ; the *tcha-ya*,* installed along the houses, had finished their business and their owners had packed up their tea-pots and their *tchibatchi* ; and our promenades becoming daily less attractive, we found we could not pass the evenings more agreeably than with our friends of the Benten.

Now and then, whilst O-Hana was occupied in copying, under the vigilant eye of her master, the lesson written out for her, I used to enter into conversation with members of the family ; with O-Sada-san, who had also become one of our friends ; with the old father, and the good old mother, Okka-san, whenever the cares of the household did not absorb her attention. We talked about the customs and habits of their country, and they questioned me a great deal about France, of which they had heard so much that excited their curiosity.

O-Hana would occasionally raise her head and

* Tea-houses.

forget entirely her task in the subject of conversation, or merely pretend to be occupied with it, but clearly in a way that showed she was ill at ease, and arrested our attention by whimsical movements and remarks, in which our fair countrywomen were not spared. The subject that had begun to interest her so much took another turn, and seemed all at once to throw her into a state of nervous excitement. Marcel, perceiving this, accordingly changed the subject as quickly as possible to something relating to Japan; one, besides, not only more interesting, but more instructive for us. He led them to describe the various details of their daily life, their traditions, and their customs, which differed so widely from ours.

At this epoch of transition in Japan from so many terrible revolutions, which have overturned the stability of the social state, as the long dormant soil of a field has been thrown up and turned upside down by the ploughshare, it is not at all rare to meet with families completely changed in social status; families, indeed, who, after having occupied the most brilliant position, are now plunged by consequent circumstances into a precarious situation verging on destitution. The family of O-Hana, not being of the noble class, had been more fortunate than others, and had, by virtue of its mediocrity, steered clear of the shoals of disaster, and saved itself from wreck without having been badly bruised even against the destroying rocks.

The old nobles, the great daimios, in the height of their splendour, among the numerous *personnel*

of their house, had workers of every class and of all kinds, artists, painters in silk, sculptors of ivory and wood, designers, architects, and others, who lived in the princes' *yasiki* with their family, and were highly esteemed, and the liberal gratuities and favours they enjoyed through the generosity of their lord enabled them to accumulate considerable resources.

Mitani-san, O-Hana's father, was the most esteemed painter of the Prince of Satsuma, who inhabited one of the richest *yasiki* in the Tycoon's capital of Yedo, and was full of confidence of ending his days there, where he was born, and where he had succeeded his father and grandfather, when war suddenly broke out, followed by the revolution.

The Prince of Satsuma, on retiring to his lands, took a portion of his suite with him, and dismissed the remainder. Mitani was to accompany his master, but the journey thither was distasteful to him; he therefore declined the favour that was offered, and preferred losing his position to abandoning his native soil and passing the remainder of his life in the southern provinces so detested by the people of the north. He then quitted Yedo, came to Yokohama, where, through the small legacy bequeathed to him by his father, added to his own savings, he bought a house and established, step by step, a shop for the sale of fancy articles. His talent as a painter, his decidedly artistic taste, his well-known honesty, that had become almost proverbial, soon contributed to render his house the most resorted to of all in the city. His customers were nearly all French; beyond the three

great nations of Latin origin objects of art are not fully appreciated, and the Japanese dealers know this so well that they do not usually show to our friends on the other side of the Channel, or to the subjects of the conquering German, anything but the tinsel of modern industry, reserving for the true connoisseur the treasures of their collections.

When I arrived at Yokohama the reputation of Mitani's establishment was still rising. The artist had aged ; his feeble sight did not enable him to exercise his art otherwise than in giving instruction in its principles to his youngest daughter. Having no son, and his eldest daughter having married an *employé* of the new Government, the wife having no taste for business, he was necessarily driven to think of retiring, and ending his days in tranquillity. For the last six months, therefore, he had informed his many customers that he had ceased to replenish his stock, that he intended to remain a little while longer to sell off the select articles, and having disposed of the ordinary stock by wholesale, he was going to instal himself with his wife and daughter, O-Hana, in his little house of the Mississippi.

"It is high time," he would sometimes say to me, "to go and live in peace on the fruits of three generations of workers. Ah! we have heaped maledictions on the heads of the foreigners, we have cursed them when we ought to have blessed them. Our life formerly was, no doubt, calmer and securer than now, but it was the life of the domestic animal which, sure of having its daily

feed, slumbers in the grovelling content of gilded servitude. A new era, inaugurated since the coming of the Europeans, has plunged many unfortunate families in the abyss of misery ; but man, when he is free, with a good heart and a pair of stout arms, may always, in a country like ours, create for himself, under a fine sky, an honourable and easy existence."

"You speak like a disciple of the French Revolution, Father Mitani," I replied, smiling. "*Vive la liberté!*" He seemed shocked at my hilarity.

Whilst I was trifling in this way he interrupted me: "I understand nothing from what you say. The Frenchman is like our girls; he laughs at everything. They say even that the men with red beards have beaten your armies on account of your incorrigible levity."

Seeing me frown at this reminder of our disasters, and that the reflection made me rather sad, he added :

"Yes, but I well know also that your constant gaiety overlies the boldest courage, the most ardent patriotism, and that some day, sooner than we think, you will resume the position you have occupied in Europe before your misfortunes, at the head of the Great Powers."

I warmly clasped the hand of my old friend in silence. O-Hana then came with anxious eyes swelling with tears to offer me a cup of tea, and the remainder of the evening passed away, sometimes in long and serious discussion on the old customs and the late stirring events of Japan, some-

times in rallying the young wife and the spoilt child of the family.

Then Danna-san made his appearance. Danna-san, as well as all the *employés* of the State, was dressed in the European fashion, and showed little esteem generally for his less advanced countrymen, particularly for his wife's relatives. Whilst he thought highly of Marcel and myself, in spite of his mimicking us occasionally, he affected to treat us on a footing of perfect equality with graceful ease. He never replied to us when we addressed him in his own language, and bored us tediously by speaking an Anglo-Franco-Japanese—a kind of gibberish “no fellow could understand.”

Danna-san, in spite of the crotchety notions common to the people of his class, was after all a worthy man, loving his wife and showing her every delicate consideration. He was intelligent, well-informed on matters relating to his country, and listened with interest whenever there was anything to learn. I was indebted to him for much valuable information on old and modern Japan, as well as for enlightened ideas on the origin of the discontent which smouldered in the latent embers before it burst into flame over the country already convulsed by revolutions.

After the most cordial assurances of friendship we separated. O-Hana was the last to address us in her charming sweet voice: “*Au revoir, friends*”—in Japanese, *Sayo-nara tomodatchi*.

Then she called out after us: “*Mionitchi! Mionitchi!*” (To-morrow! To-morrow!)

CHAPTER V.

ANOTHER EVENING "EN FAMILLE."

A Bonze—Prayers at a Discount—The Two co-existing Religions—Neglected Worship—Religious Indifference—Poverty of the Priesthood—Some Religious Customs—Mitani's Views—The Fox and the Japanese Maidens—A Tender and Touching Avowal.

ONE evening Marcel had gone out half-an-hour before me, and when I arrived at the shop I distinctly heard a low nasal murmuring that surprised me. The family was there as usual, but O-Hana was not visible. The noise coming from her room sometimes rose to a higher tone and then subsided to a suppressed muttering. My astonishment was so spontaneous and irrepressible that my friends could not help laughing. O-Sada then rising and taking my hand, and putting her finger on her lip with the gesture of the Statue of Silence, led me up to the panel of paper which separated the apartment from her sister's. A slight rent in this slender hanging just permitted a curious eye to penetrate into the modest retreat of the young girl.

O-Sada, pointing out this slit, invited me by a sign to gratify my curiosity.

Before a sort of petty chapel, illuminated by a galaxy of wax tapers, a *bonze*, bearing his sacerdotal ornaments, was squatting on a mat. He held before his half-closed eyes a book of prayers, and mumbled, without taking breath, verse after verse, producing thereby the singular noise that had surprised me on arriving. At a couple of paces behind the priest, O-Hana was bent in a humble posture and plunged into a profound meditation.

"How long," I inquired of O-Sada, "is this prayer-wheel going on turning prayers?"

"I really don't know," she replied. "O-Hana has become very pious lately. She is very generous to the priests, and we shall have the entertainment for some time yet—two hours at least, if she has unluckily given this one so much as a *bou*." *

"What!" I cried, "for a *bou*, more than two hours of litany? The commodity is cheap enough."

The merry young woman, so full of pleasantry, squeezed my arm with a look of mock reproach, and we joined again the other members of the family.

The Japanese generally are not religious—they are indifferent. The men are nearly all Positivists and the women simply superstitious.

* The value of a *bou* is a shilling.

There are two religions co-existing—Shintôism, the ancient religion of Japan, though one void of a moral code, and Buddhism, the religion imported from Thibet after having traversed the vast lands subject to the Chinese empire.

Christianity, though perhaps the religion of the future, counts for nothing at present: according to the missionaries even, it makes no fresh converts, and includes but a very small number of the faithful. It is a form descending mostly from those converted by St. Francis—one difficult to maintain within the orthodox limits of the Gospel.

The two creeds, Shintôism and Buddhism, after a long course of rivalry and mutual hostility, first one and then the other having been favoured by the Government in the ascendant, seem now disposed to amalgamate and to unite the remnants of their influence to bear the brunt of disfavour—a kind of ostracism with which they are stigmatised.

The temples are becoming daily more and more deserted; the treasury of the priests, exhausted by revolutions, is far from being replenished by the petty sums wrung from superstition—money which is not always of standard value. This is beyond dispute, for the traders who throng the entrance of certain sanctuaries shamelessly sell to pilgrims, for the customary alms and offerings to the gods, old pieces of coin withdrawn from circulation.

The outward ceremonies of worship in the Buddhist religion, formerly so very brilliant, resemble in no slight degree those of the Roman

Catholic; the priests, bearing their sacerdotal ornaments almost like those of our priests, preserve in their demeanour—at once grave, impressive, and precise—something that forcibly reminds one of certain orders of our shaven, barefooted friars.

The wretchedness of the minister is now everywhere reflected from the exercise of the worship: nearly all the temples, excepting only a favoured few, are houses of refuge for priests driven from their *bonseries*, and present a most singular aspect.

This medley of rites, derived from two hostile religions, and brought together by the force of circumstances, produces the saddest and most discordant effect.

Pilgrims unusually devout, who come reciting their paternoster, kneel down indiscriminately before Shintô or Buddha, and, if you were to ask them which religion they professed, they would certainly laugh at your simple question, for most likely they do not themselves know which divinity they worship. One may have a headache, and another a sore foot. A disease-curing god lounges in some corner, well coated with grease, the accumulation from the fingering of ten generations. The first sufferer,* after having caressed the hideous cheek of the god, rubs his head with penitential sorrow, throws a couple of counterfeit *djou-mon-sen** into the gaping trunk for offerings before the altar, and takes his departure satisfied. The

* A small round copper coin pierced with a square hole, a dozen of which are hardly worth a penny.

second invalid goes through the same ceremony, with this difference, that he addresses himself to the god's foot instead of his head. Sometimes it is a wife who desires a male child, or a young maiden who pines for a husband after her own dream; sometimes a poor, rickety creature, whose mother longs to see him grow. The god, with the most complete indifference and impartiality, surrenders himself to every supplicant, to the most amusing caressing, the most grotesque series of manipulations. But who is this beneficent deity? Is he a Buddhist saint, or one of the glorious companions of Shintô? It is rare, indeed, to meet with one of the vulgar herd of Japan capable of giving an answer to this question.

In families, however, there are certain regulations, which determine whether an invocation should be addressed to a minister of Buddha or to a priest of Shintô.

"Accordingly, where a child is born," Mitani informed me, "they consecrate it to Shintô, and in case of death the minister of Buddha is entrusted to accompany the corpse to its resting-place. The priest, after having recited the usual prayers over the body and the grave, retires with the mourners' friends, the family only remaining, who perform solemnly and leisurely the last duties, whether they simply consign the remains to earth or to the pyre, which is usually the case if they profess the religion of Shintô, and have the means of buying the essences and wood employed in this operation.

"Since a recent decree of the Emperor, crema-

tion, though not prohibited, is at least subject to certain regulations of public order. There are now localities outside the towns set apart for this sort of ceremony, where the corpse may be reduced to cinders without offending the olfactory nerves of the population.

"You will be surprised some day to discover, when you have become more familiar with our language and when the opportunity presents itself, that the list of persons assisting at the funeral is not written from right to left, but from left to right as in European writings. If you were to ask me the reason for this," added the intelligent shop-keeper, "I should be very much puzzled to give it you."

There is another singular custom, but, in my opinion, very proper, which consists in giving the defunct a new name—Okouri-na—the name he will bear eternally in the future life into which he has just entered; this name is inscribed on the tablets suspended in the family house, in that part consecrated to the divinity, and before which, on certain days, they burn incense and tapers.

"You believe, then, in a new life beyond the grave?" I inquired of my host, interrupting him in his discourse.

The old man, seemingly astonished at this question, reflected for a moment, then with a grave tone :

"What should I know?" he said. "In our childhood we are taught many things, and when we grow up, these ideas seem to us absurd, or

nothing better than crotchety old woman's tales. Now, so far as I am concerned, I believe nothing, because I have never been taught anything worthy of credence; but I have questioned myself seriously sometimes: Where does man come from, and where will he go? The body dies, it is true, but then the spirit? I don't know whether you understand me clearly or not? I thought there was a great *Kami*,* all powerful, master of all, and perhaps that our spirit, which comes from him, will return to him."

"That, in a word," I replied, "is the creed of the whole world—faith itself purified from the innumerable useless and ridiculous practices that dress up with tinsel the various religions that strut on the face of the globe. This *Kami*, we Christians call God. The spirit is what we call the soul—the immortal soul."

This solemn declaration produced a surprising effect upon the old man. It was the first time, perhaps, that he was enabled to get a clear conception of his own sentiments, which I had analysed for him in a few words.

"I have always thought," he exclaimed, "whenever I saw some resemblance between your religion and that of our *bonzes*, that they might easily come to a mutual good understanding."

"No," I demurred decisively. "Never will religions come to a common understanding; but a day will come, after many centuries perhaps, when

* A spirit-god.

mankind, united in one faith, will form a single grand community of brethren that nothing will cause them to divide."

During this long dissertation the *bonze* had finished his orisons, and O-Hana had come unobtrusively and noiselessly to seat herself behind us.

"What have you been supplicating the *Kami* for?" Marcel asked his friend.

"I prayed them to grant me favours," replied the damsel.

As we pressed her with questions, to know what favours she entreated so earnestly from Heaven, the young girl burst into tears. Marcel took her hands, caressed her as one fondles an invalid child, addressed her most tenderly, begging her to open her heart to him. She wiped away the tears trickling on her cheek, smiled at him lovingly, but kept her secret.

"She is afraid of the fox," said O-Sada, laughing.

"What fox?" I asked.

Every one burst out laughing.

"It is an old story, a legend well known among the simple country people of our land," replied Danna-san, who had just entered; "but I am quite sure that this little ninny has turned my lessons to better account, and no longer believes in the ludicrous and extravagant old nurse's tales intended to frighten whimsical children."

"I am very anxious to learn everything relating

to Japan of the past," I said to O-Sada's husband ; " narrate to us, therefore, my dear Ouyeno, the legend of the fox."

Danna-san good-humouredly assented.

"The fox;" began the *employé*, "is a mysterious being, a personification of cunning, subtlety, and knavery, a companion with whom one may be on good terms, but one never to be trusted, avoiding, however, giving offence by suspicion. There is hardly a legend in the country in which he does not play some rôle or other, and you will see everywhere in the rural districts, in the midst of thickets and tall grass, little temples which are approached by hidden paths. These are the temples of the fox. The legend to which O-Sada has just alluded, in rallying her sister, relates that one day a lively young girl had succeeded in playing a nice trick on the cunning fellow. The latter, furious at the ill turn done him, swore he would be avenged in the most signal manner, not only on his enemy, but on all the girls of Nippon. The legend then relates an endless number of strange tricks of the fantastic rover of our forests. Sometimes he introduces himself into the body of the young girl, causing her endless ailments ; sometimes, in consequence of his machinations, a wandering lass has turned nine days and nine nights in a fatal circle without coming to the end of her journey. Therefore, to appease the rancour of this maleficent spirit, they do not pay him empty compliments, but offerings of all kinds flow into his temples.

Unprofitable offerings, you will say no doubt ; but what does not fall to the fox's share falls, you may be sure, to the lot of one still craftier."

With this sly observation Danna-san, fully satisfied with himself, wished us good evening as he led away his wife.

Just as we were going to leave, O-Hana, leaning towards my friend's ear, said with a volubility unusual to her :

"If I did not reveal to you the object of my prayers, you might think me *bacca* (foolish) ; I no more believe than Ouyeno does in the extravagant story he has just related to you." Then with a look of embarrassment mingled with entreaty, she continued : "Do not be angry with me—I would have hidden it from you, but it is of no use, for you would soon have learnt it—you can read through my eyes what is going on in the innermost recesses of my heart—Oh ! forgive me ; but I feel that if you go away it will be a terrible blow for me, —I pray to the *Kami* to keep you here always —always here."

After this confidence, imparted with a fervour and pathos that would have touched a heart of marble, the youthful maiden fled from our presence like a bird. Marcel felt that, at this moment, it would only add to her embarrassment to follow her, and therefore resolved to depart.

The mother was squatting on her heels in the Japanese manner, and was in a tranquil doze ; Mitani was closing the shutters of his shop.

Whilst I was lighting my cigar on the door-step, Marcel by my side seemed almost overcome by a sudden violent emotion ; the father just coming in recalled him to commonplace reality.

"Your thoughts are occupied with the fox," remarked the good old man. "Be quite easy on that score ; it is a rogue that seldom has anything to say but to young girls."

CHAPTER VI.

THE THEATRE BEFORE AND BEHIND THE SCENES.

Marcel's Embarrassment—A Happy Existence—The Theatre—The Green-room and its Fair Occupants—Erroneous Opinions regarding Japanese Women—The Theatre of Men Actors—The Theatre of Women Actors—The Spectacle of the Public Baths—A Moving Tragedy.

THE trouble occasioned by O-Hana's precious disclosure kept Marcel awake till morning, and during his restlessness a confusion of irreconcilable projects danced in his excited and bewildered brain. Sometimes, fancying that this avowal was a mere whim of a wayward child, he would lightly pass it over, and, by his silence and indifference, leave the young girl to suppose that he had not understood her ; sometimes, reflecting on the consequences that such a love, if serious, might have if, instead of crushing it in the bud before it had expanded into a full-blown flower, he allowed it to grow under the vivifying warmth of their daily intercourse : this would be dishonourable, and in such a

case he was resolved to tear himself from her at all risks.

The long, anxious hours of a sleepless night had run their course, and Marcel had not yet arrived at any decision.

The image of O-Hana then haunted his brain : a more loving look, a longer pressure of the hand, told him plainly enough that the throbbing of her chaste heart had touched the chords of his own.

The tender maiden, whose breast was relieved by the confession of a secret that troubled her soul and parched her lips, soon recovered her usual gaiety ; a few days were sufficient for a nature so blithe to resume its tranquillity, but a moment ruffled by the first blast of passion.

Life passed sweetly and softly with the lovers, now in their halcyon days, without noisy pleasures, without even a pang, to disturb that quietude which should presage the bliss of heaven, but which, in the life of man, is often ominous of catastrophes and convulsions ; as if God in His merciful foresight accorded to His creature the time to store up the resources of courage and energy, before rushing into the great struggle he is doomed to encounter in this world.

Sometimes we used to go to the theatre : the Japanese, like all the peoples of the extreme East, are passionately fond of this kind of recreation. The smallest Japanese town possesses a company of players. In Yokohama there are many, without including the innumerable tea-houses, where acrobats and declaimers give their entertainments every evening.

The theatres are large wooden constructions, rather longer than wide; the stage occupies one end, and, just as in France, the boxes and rooms for the actors are placed behind, over the machinery, near the furniture and scenery. The curtain, instead of being raised and lowered as in France, is opened and closed by a very simple mechanism. The scene that answers the purpose of a curtain is placed on a turn-table in the centre, and by this ingenious rotary movement the change of scene is rapidly made.

In this country, where equality has but an ideal existence, it seems surprising not to find in the theatre a place really comfortable. This anomaly is explained however, on reflecting that the theatres were resorted to exclusively by the people, whilst every noble could have a company in his pay if he liked, or engage those of the town for the entertainment of himself and his household.

The whole of the pit is divided into little squares, capable of accommodating three or four squatting Japanese. There are two ranges of galleries one above the other on each side, and opposite to the stage is a tribune with a gradation of rising seats. The galleries and tribune are divided into stalls similar to those in the pit.

The actors make their entries and exits either by the side-scene or in passing over a foot-bridge, elevated eight or twelve inches above the floor, traversing the pit throughout to the left of the spectators. The actor arriving by this foot-bridge is almost always followed by a child, whose busi-

ness is to light the way with a lantern, suspended at the end of a flexible switch.

The prompter places himself in a free-and-easy attitude behind the actor, and the orchestra is composed more of choristers than instrumental performers, who are seated to the left of the performers either in a railed-in box or simply on the stage.

Whatever drawbacks this scenic arrangement may have, the acting is always conducted in a spirited and natural manner ; the acts, contrary to what takes place in Chinese theatres, are mingled with unexpected and interesting events and incidents. The acts are judiciously timed, and the plays broken by numerous intervals, during which perambulating dealers sell newspapers, and bring round on pretty lacquered trays all kinds of refreshments, excellent *bonbonneries*, and even delicate little suppers artistically dressed up and decidedly appetising.

The company of actors is composed either entirely of men or entirely of women. In companies of men, beardless lads personate women, and in women's companies, the tallest and those having the most masculine voice, take the men's part. The plasticity of the Japanese in general highly favours the required travesty.

It is very curious in the theatres of female actors to visit the green-rooms and enter into the boxes. These ladies will receive you most courteously, displaying their white teeth as they crack the *bonbons* you bring them, without in any way interrupting their delicate operations or deranging

their *toilette*—frequently *excessivement décolletée*—without manifesting the least embarrassment, but also without according the most insignificant of those *petites faveurs* that are so generally pursued and so readily yielded in France in similar places of resort.

“Why do you come here to us?” said one of these pretty actresses once, reddening with rage, after having ordered the expulsion, without ceremony, of one of these impertinent intruders who had dared to obtrude his gallantry on one of these ladies in a manner too distasteful. “There are other places of entertainment where you may go and be well received. This is not the *Yankiro*.* If we are pleased to receive you here, learn to treat us with proper respect.”

With regard to this subject it would not be inopportune, I think, to rectify an opinion generally held in Europe, and especially in France, of the women of Japan. This opinion, based on the reports of a few travellers, who have not carefully observed, or perhaps have simply generalised a fact superficially observed, is blurred with an error discreditable to Japan. It is a misapprehension that rouses the indignation of Japanese sufficiently well educated to read our books or understand what we think of them, when they come to us and hear us talk at random about their curious country.

I had often heard Japan spoken of in France in

* The disreputable quarter of Yokohama.

this way: "It is an Eldorado, the abode of eternal spring, of wonderful flowers and of women who never say 'no.'" With this notion in my head gathered from all parts, I came, I saw, and, like those who preceded me, I saw only dimly. The reason is very simple. The human mind is so constituted that it cannot easily withdraw itself from the influence of what other people say—it comes already prejudiced. Another reason would explain more instances of the misconception, perhaps. The European on landing in Japan comes in contact only with an uneducated class, already corrupted with everything that is vicious and execrable in European civilisation, one which certainly cannot be taken as a specimen or type of the people at large.

After a few months' sojourn and a more attentive and studied observation, I have arrived at the following conclusion: there is one fact that cannot be questioned, and this no doubt has led to a generalisation as false as unjust; this fact is, that in case of absolute distress a young girl may earn the wages of sin without dishonouring herself so completely as in France. From this it is concluded that parents freely sell their daughters, whose conduct before marriage is considered of slight importance and calculated to hinder in no way their future establishment in life. This is at least an exaggeration, for *mésalliances*, that is, marriages between *samourai* and *djoro*, between men of respectability and *filles perdues*, are much more rare than in France. The Japanese, besides, are

quite as careful of their honour as we are of ours.

Among the nobility and the superior citizens, two classes that begin to regard themselves on a footing of equality, the daughters are brought up to a rigorous course of conduct far more punctilious than the sheer prudery of our French girls; and if I were required to pass judgment on the merits of the mode of education in Japan and of that adopted in Europe, I should decide in favour of the former.

With us everything is conventional, but in Japan there is, on the contrary, plain dealing and straightforwardness; no subterfuge or roundabout ways. In the upper classes, who are imbued with the principles of the valiant warriors that have thrown lustre on chivalry, the daughters of the house are brought up under the severest discipline, and the dagger that embellishes their girdle is by no means a simple ornament, but a well-tempered blade, which they would not hesitate to use in the defence of their honour if they thought it in danger. An instance of this is mentioned of a young girl who, having been pursued with declarations as insolent as passionate, turned round and, more reasonable than Lucretia, plunged the deadly weapon into the heart of her cowardly assailant at the moment she was threatened with an unruly hand.

In the middle and lower class there is less dignity and less restraint, but among these one sees no danger, and, in fact, there is no danger.

The *écarts* of the fair sex are not more common than in Europe, and when a damsel oversteps the strict limits of decorum, it is less through allure-ment than necessity; therefore, one may here agree with Musset :

Pauvreté, pauvreté, c'est toi la courtisane.

Most tourists who visit Japan seldom go beyond the ports open to Europeans, and form their opinion of the women from the specimens they meet with in these cities, particularly in special quarters which they do not fail to visit from curiosity.

One of the first promenades a newly-arrived visitor at Yokohama is induced by a cicerone or obliging friend to take, is that of the Yankiro ; I will say nothing of this pleasure resort, it has already been too well described by an enthusiastic and elegant writer, the Comte de Beauvoir, for me to attempt now another sketch.

The inhabitants of this immense caravansary are, indeed, very numerous. At Yedo, Kiôto, Ôsaka, Kôbé, and Nagasaki, similar quarters hide in their recesses quite a swarm of little *bonbon*-eaters. Then there is another class, also very numerous, the actresses and the *guécha*,* who, on account of their dress and their bearing, may be easily but erroneously confounded with the *djoro*. It is, then, easy to understand the misconception ; it is this imposing battalion of the priestesses of the Japanese Venus that travellers have encountered at

* Vocalists.

every step, and which they imagined to represent the women of Japan.

Another circumstance that has contributed to give foreigners a very unfavourable opinion of Japanese morals is the indiscriminate assemblage of both sexes at the warm baths. For my part I thought it very strange, passing strange, at first, this promiscuous concourse of human beings disporting, with utter disregard of each other's nude presence, with all the freedom displayed in a lively frog-pond. Cleanliness, it is true, is felt to be as necessary to the existence of a Japanese as the rice he eats. It is a question of economy and public convenience, and their notions of propriety are not to be judged by European habits, but by their own. If the Japanese is rich enough to have a bath in his *yasiki*, he does not frequent the *younya*.* The vulgar herd, the poor, are the sole customers of these establishments, that shock those so prone to throw the first stone.

It would be more becoming perhaps, to affect separation, to stretch curtains across in which holes can be easily torn ; to put up doors with gaping crevices ; machines with pierced planks, where the prurient eye of the old *paillard* or young gallant may surprise the unsuspecting occupant. With us, it seems, people may break every commandment in the Decalogue, provided the sinner be so far initiated in hypocrisy as to do it *comme il faut*.

The custom that prevails at the Japanese public

* Public baths.

baths is one of the most characteristic traits of their manners, though one, Europeans cannot contemplate without strong prejudice. Modesty, however, is decidedly conventional in its various phases. These, in all their variety, are simply the product of education. When one has passed some time in Japan; when one has visited its public baths, frequented and peered into the recesses of its theatres, been brought into intimate contact with its life, and been enabled, from this experience, to perceive the *naïveté* of its manners, he cannot help smiling on recalling the story in Genesis of our first parents, who, immediately on eating the forbidden fruit, resorted to the leaves of trees to hide their nakedness. Evidently their notions of modesty were not ours, for they only came into existence when ours usually, in such a crisis, are abandoned like an old garment.

But we have strayed a long way from the theatres—*revenons à nos moutons*.

O-Hana was passionately fond of the theatre. Her aged parents took her there two or three times a year, but soon getting fatigued, they never remained to the end of the performance, to the great disappointment of the young girl. Ouyeno was not disposed to compromise his dignity of Government *employé* by frequenting the Japanese theatres; the two sisters were therefore almost deprived of the enjoyment of an escort so much appreciated by ladies of all countries.

The first time we offered to accompany them thither filled them with joy and gratitude. Ouyeno,

flattered undoubtedly in being admitted to show himself in the society of French officers, graciously offered to join us—went even beforehand to retain places, and ordered seats to be placed for the two *idjin-san*, that their limbs might be spared the unpleasant sensation of squatting five hours on their heels.

The entertainment, as is always the case, was composed of two plays, a drama and a light comedy. I hardly know why we chose the theatre of male actors—companies, in my opinion, everywhere in Japan much inferior to the corps of women. As I understood little or nothing of the poetic language, and being wearied also with the obtrusive attentions and intricate explanations of our companion, I derived very little amusement from the performance, and left at one o'clock in the morning in a very bad humour, fully resolved to devote as little time as possible in future to this tiresome pastime.

A few days after this O-Hana said to me: "They are going to give a new play to-night at the theatre of women." Her eyes were glistening with anticipated pleasure.

"Ask Okka-san to allow you to go there; your sister can come with us. Ouyeno, of course, will readily entrust her to our charge."

The young lady, delighted with this proposal, entered into negotiations at once, and quickly brought them to a successful issue.

It was arranged that Marcel and I should come at eight o'clock to fetch the two young ladies.

Long before the drawing aside of the curtain, we were cosily seated between our two fair companions, who were warmly wrapped in their padded silk mantles. Nothing was wanting for the occasion and our enjoyment; neither the *tchibatchi*, in which the water was singing for our tea, nor the soft cushions that superseded the little bench, nor the lacquered tray loaded with sweetmeats. O-Sada seemed delighted to escape for a whole evening from contemplating the grave countenance of her dignified husband. O-Hana beamed with joy.

"I am quite happy!" she exclaimed to us. "I have never been so happy in my life."

It was, in fact, a first performance, or perhaps one resumed after an interval. In Japan, as elsewhere, a first representation draws everybody. The house was full, and our little square stall of four places was continually threatened with intrusion.

The first performance was a long drama abounding in exciting incidents.

One of the favourites of a grand daimio gives birth to a son. This child, from his earliest age, is endowed with every physical and moral gift, and is therefore adored by the prince. His mother, loaded with favours, bestows, in her turn, benefits on all around, and in this way creates a kind of suite of devoted adherents.

The legitimate wife of the daimio is stirred with wrath, and fearing the prejudice caused to her own offspring, resolves to get rid of the son of her rival. The hard-hearted woman sets her wits to

work to make away with the beloved child. After having miscarried in several cunning plots, she seeks out a band of brigands, who are duly bribed to carry him off and put an end to his life.

Just at the moment the crime is about to be perpetrated, at the sight of which the unfortunate mother is wringing her hands in despair, an immense eagle swoops down from the sky on the assassin, seizes the boy in his powerful claws, and disappears in the clouds with his precious burden.

The mother in her agony throws herself on the ground with her face on the soil ; but she returns thanks to the *Kami*, for they, in depriving her of her son, leave her the hope of finding him again some day.

Time passes, year after year ; the favourite, driven from the palace, leads a wretched life. She vegetates, and weeps unceasingly for him whose image is graven on her heart ; but a mysterious voice whispers to her to hope.

During this time, a young warrior, coming from afar, stirs the whole country with his exploits. He was marching, it was said, with a few partisans, to the conquest of a country promised by the gods.

One day, the poor woman wanders through a wood, weighed down with her enduring grief ; some ruffians suddenly pounce on her and cruelly maltreat her ; they are on the point of striking her to the ground, and, no doubt, of dispatching her on the spot, when a fine young man, radiant with burnished armour, appears on the scene ; valiant

companions in arms follow at his heels. At the sight of this formidable armed band, the villains take to flight ; the victim falls in a swoon, and the young warrior goes to her succour. But, as if struck by a long-dormant remembrance or a sudden flash on the mind, he starts, and contemplates with respect features that are familiar to him.

"My mother !" he cries.

"My son !" he hears in response.

For fifteen long, cruel years the mother and son have been separated, but the voice of vengeance has spoken, and they now recognise each other without misgiving.

After a touching scene and mutual explanations, perhaps a little too long and, in a manner, too ornate, the son leads away the mother with the demonstrative vehemence characteristic of heroes, and rushes towards the *yasiki* of his inhuman father.

At this apparition the terrible *daïmio* is deeply affected. The gods have so ordained it and it comes to pass, that repentance suddenly enters his breast, and, after many years of inconsolable grief, he gives him his benediction, loads him with riches, and this accomplished—what is by no means pleasant to witness—makes there and then a rent in his body, and expires in public in the most frightful convulsions.

This tragedy, simple enough in conception, was performed with much animation ; the pathetic tirades, delivered with classic emphasis, glowed with ardent and true poesy ; the comic episodes, placed at long intervals to relieve the sustained

intensity of the tragedy, were executed with a raciness approaching that of the French stage. In short, to my great astonishment, induced perhaps by the animated and interesting explanations of my companions, I surprised myself more than once actually under the sway of a romantic tenderness, as in the glowing days of my youth, when we students, brimming with enthusiasm, went to pour out our pent-up feelings over the creations of our poets, and mingle our real tears with the simulated tears of their heroes.

As I desired to go behind the curtain and visit the green-room and boxes of the actresses between the plays, I went out during this long interval.

It was the first time I obtained a close view of this singular community. Most of the actresses are very young girls, ranging from fourteen to seventeen, sometimes even children of ten or eleven, some having their mother to watch over them, others an elder sister who attends to their needful comforts. Each has her little room, which is not only her box, where she bedaubs herself with rouge and pearl-powder and puts on her costume, but her bedroom, kitchen, and dining-room. The manager of the theatre has therefore, in this way, his corps always at hand. A question will arise probably, how these poor girls manage to live, so many together in so small a space.

Everything I saw surprised me in this domiciliary visit, but what surprised me most, I must confess, was the *naïf*, unconcerned demeanour,

a bearing so free from any kind of embarrassment, maintained by these young and chaste artists.

The second play was a kind of *vaudeville*, not too strictly within the bounds of decorum, I fancy, for several times our fair friends blushed to the roots of their hair, and peremptorily refused to give us any explanation. The whole house seemed to indulge in uproarious laughter until the curtain was drawn, and long after the theatre was closed, we could hear, from Mitani's house, merry parties going home and talking about this farce *au gros sel*. The family sat up for us, and expected us to finish the evening's amusement. It was an agreeable surprise for us, *à la japonaise*, to find the supper-table laid.

Ouyeno, who was very cross through having been obliged to pass so many tedious hours waiting for his wife, consoled himself as well as he could in munching a quantity of little cakes. Marcel, already quite dextrous in the use of eating-sticks, did honour to the varied dishes of our hosts. For my part, I was contented to watch the circulation of numerous miniature dishes, the luxuries of Japanese tables, whilst actively employed in imbibing several dozens of microscopic cups of delicious tea. Then we all took part in a long conversation, smoked delicate little perfumed pipes incessantly, and the clock-tower of the Benten struck three before we got on board.

CHAPTER VII.

MUSIC, COSTUME, COIFFURE, AND COURTSHIP.

The *Chamisen*—Music, Love, and Poesy—The Flower of the Benten—Freedom of Youthful Intercourse before Marriage—The Coiffure of Japanese Ladies—A Transient Cloud darkens O-Hana's Happiness—Explanations.

THE horrible writhing and final fearful convulsions of the poor daimio fluttered in my eyes for some minutes as I laid my head on my pillow ; soon lulled however, by the notes of some late *chamisen* in the distance, I fell into a profound slumber.

The *chamisen* is a kind of guitar with three chords, played by a bit of ivory or hard wood terminating in a little crook. The high notes of this instrument are rather shrill, but it has a certain softness in the medium notes, and when it is used to accompany the voice. It is played only by women.

In winter evenings it is not uncommon to see six or eight young girls assembled around the *ichibatchi*, with the *chamisen* in the hands of one entertaining the group. Then, while the mother is

busy with the cares of the house, and the father is smoking pipe after pipe, and whilst the habitual cup of tea is incessantly passing round, the *chamïcen* may be heard to an advanced hour of the night. Sometimes they are slow, plaintive songs, sometimes the time is accelerated with much animation to a pitch of fury, dying out at last in a protracted cadence.

This music, in which the minor mode prevails, produces, on first hearing it, an effect difficult to analyse; the impression is almost painful, but after listening a while it becomes decidedly pleasing.

In the fine summer nights, in the brilliant evenings of autumn, when everything seems suffused in the glamour of poesy, these domestic concerts are given in the open air, on the threshold of the house, in the streets, on the sea-shore, and in the Lilliputian gardens in which the Japanese take never-ending delight. Then it is a kind of melodious humming, a confused sound, with clearer and more distinct notes now and then borne along the air, interrupted occasionally with the merry, ringing laugh of some fair member composing this fairylike, invisible orchestra.

How many delightful evenings passed away in this way, listening to the melodious strains that touched the very chords of our hearts, and still resound in my ear!

O-Hana, with her head leaning on my friend's shoulder, one hand drooping and the other feebly resting on her *chamïcen* to keep it from falling off

her knee, seemed absorbed in the contemplation of some object invisible.

"What are you looking at in that way, my pretty little flower?"

"I am listening," she answered, "my well-beloved, to the voice of heaven that is carolling in me."

And Okka-san, calling to us from within, said :

"Come in, my children, it is late. I have been sleeping for these last two hours."

The young maiden replied :

"Mother, only a few minutes more."

Then telling a fib, the naughty child added :

"It is hardly night yet."

Okka-san closed her eyes, but soon called to us again ; and in this way midnight arrived much sooner than we expected.

This intimate intercourse between a girl of sixteen and a young man of twenty-two, which in France would be considered dangerous, not to say improper, is perfectly natural in Japan. Parents the most respectable, the most watchful of the proper self-respect of their daughters, would never dream that they could run any danger. Daughters, in fact, are so very numerous in this country where prostitution is not a state thoroughly dishonouring ; marriage, besides, is so easily made—I may say so easily unmade, too, a circumstance that does not render divorce more frequent—that it is far from being common, indeed, a thing almost unknown, of families being thereby thrown into trouble.

The sentiment the young Breton cherished for

his confiding friend was certainly very tender ; he loved the sweet, blithe maiden. Still, the idea of making her his wife according to the law of Japan never entered his head, for the wife actually in this condition would be, for a European, but a servant-mistress. He experienced in the enjoyment of her society a happiness he was not willing to scrutinise too closely, but he felt that this happiness would not survive respect. He would not brush a hue from this delicate flower, fearing that too rude a touch would blight all the beauty and fragrance of her love, her youth, and her goodness.

O-Hana was really lovely. Contrary to the opinion general in Europe, the complexion of the Japanese girl in her youth is not yellowish ; in the north especially it is not uncommon to meet with fair and rosy-complexioned young girls, who have no reason to envy the bloom of our bright young Parisians. The upper part of the bust, which the national costume leaves uncovered, is almost always perfect ; the contour of the neck and its rise from the shoulders and the upper part of the chest are beautiful in their symmetry. Unfortunately, the figure descending from the hips reveals proportions far too juvenile, which are not always in harmony with the amplitude and outlines of the trunk.

In our friend all the fine physical qualities of her countrywomen were united, while the defects inherent in her race were singularly attenuated. Under the coquettishly-pretty costume of the Japanese girls might be perceived graceful contours gradually becoming more pronounced ; her stature

developed likewise, and, in this country of little people, O-Hana, the "Flower of the Benten," was comparatively tall, and was at least half a head taller than her companions. A lively colour rose spontaneously in her cheek on the slightest emotion, illuminating her sweet countenance with joyful spirit.

In the people of the extreme East the colour of the hair and eyes is uniformly black ; there are, however, some individuals not so dark. This quality, which in Cochin-China is considered as something monstrous, in China as a great rarity, is in Japan not at all uncommon. Are these varieties of tint the simple result of chance, or are they the inheritance from some other race with which it mingled in the past, not precisely determined ? I will not venture to solve this obscure problem ; without, however, wishing to speak too confidently, it seems to me, so far as regards Japan at least, that the latter conjecture is more likely to be true.

O-Hana was blonde for a Japanese, but a blonde with black eyes ; her hair, deep auburn, had under certain lights those warm tones, those brilliant reflections, so much loved by painters of the Dutch school.

We took delight in getting her to take down her magnificent hair, which fell almost to her feet.

The women of Japan have a coiffure that demands long and tedious work, and as they cannot do it themselves they almost all are

obliged to have recourse to the art of the hair-dresser.

Feeling some curiosity to penetrate the mystery of the elaborate arrangement, through which the hair seems to rise so victoriously over elegant heads, I had begged O-Hana many times without success to allow me to look on at the operation of her hair-dresser : whether from feminine coquetry or simply from maidenly modesty—whatever she thought, she never replied to this manifestation of inquisitiveness.

One day, returning from an early promenade with the company from the ship, we arrived quite unexpectedly at one o'clock—an unusual circumstance, not being in the habit of visiting there at that hour. The shop was hardly open ; the mother had gone out, and the father was working in the garden ; O-Sada was keeping house.

" Marcel-san is not here," Ouyeno's wife said to me hurriedly, " nor O-Hana either ; Okka-san has taken her away to help her in her daily shopping."

Marcel, who was a little behind, entered at this moment, and, not being quite convinced of the exactitude of this announcement, knowing that O-Hana rarely went out in the morning, raised his voice in order to be recognised. On hearing the well-known tone the young maiden could hold herself no longer, and from the next room a ringing, musical laugh burst out. A sliding panel glided aside in the partition, and in the opening gleamed a pair of mischievous-looking eyes.

"Come! Come now, curious one, come and see your friend's hair!"

With this exclamation the young girl shook her charming head, and over her fair shoulders fell, like the break and descent of an ocean billow, luxuriant masses of waving hair brilliant with golden tints.

"It is all really my own," she said, laughing with self-satisfaction. "Is it not quite as fine as those heads of hair bought for their weight in gold by your countrywomen? Tell me that!"

The happy Breton was never tired of regarding this fascinating creature; her hair, entirely loose and falling without order, had parted in the middle, and gave to her physiognomy a milder and more feminine look.

The Japanese coiffure, whilst decidedly very elegant, is wanting in softness and litheness; the hair-dressers are real artists, and in the execution of their work use a variety of objects and ingredients; the coiffure terminates in a little lock, rising from the middle of the forehead between two copious rolls, and attached on the crown by a fine silver pin upon a bow of pink or pale green *crêpon*. The parting along the middle, so pretty in the hair of European women, is therefore not adopted by the ladies of Japan.

We assisted at the interesting operation of the Japanese Figaro from beginning to end. After having given a final survey of her head in her large metal mirror, O-Hana turned round to us,

with an air as much as to say, "What do you think of me now?"

"Flower is thy name," replied Marcel, "and never was a woman more justly named; but I would prefer you a hundred times before they made up for you that sublime chignon, pomaded, oiled, and gummed, and that self-asserting little cockade that so pertly stands up above your forehead like a fine cockscomb."

The maiden pouted her disappointment and left the room without another word.

When we returned in the evening, I fancied there were some signs that she had been weeping; the tender little creature had a weary and sad look, which quickly recalled the morning's incident; her hair seemed to have gone through an unpromising struggle; symmetrical arrangement had been discarded, and with it the silver pin and the gaily-coloured *crêpons*.

The father seemed grave and uneasy.

"O-Hana is becoming too capricious," he remarked to my countryman, "scold her; perhaps she will listen to you more readily than to me—you, whose name is always evoked in her prayers."

"My child," said my friend, "I was merely laughing, nothing more. If I love you unadorned, it is yourself I love and not the smart knots and bows which cannot add a jot to your beauty."

"Oh! is it true, then?" interrupted the poor child, watching ardently his countenance; then

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leaning to his ear, she murmured: "Is it not to remind you of the ladies of your own country that you wish to see me with my hair hanging down?"

"'Tis you I love," repeated Marcel, "and I care nothing for the women of my country."

She brightened up immediately, her eyes sparkling with joy, her bosom palpitating with emotion; then rushing towards her father: "I shall be a good girl now," she cried, embracing him passionately.

Moved as he was, taken unawares by this ardent caress, which, by the way, was probably not destined altogether for him, the father wiped away a tear of joy and pride as he gazed in the countenance of his beloved child.

The next day we found O-Hana transfigured; she had not changed her national costume, but had adopted with exquisite taste and simplicity a European coiffure disposed with amusing coquetry.

The timid maiden, not knowing what effect would be produced on the Frenchmen by what her father called a masquerade, did not venture to raise her eyes, and with bated breath waited for the opinion of him whom she had secretly accepted in her heart for her master.

Marcel rose, went up to her and took her hand. I could plainly see her trembling.

"Thank you," he said to her. "I am grateful to the Flower of the East that has so cheerfully

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metamorphosed herself for me into a flower of the West. Thanks to the loveliest, the best of all the maidens of Japan."

From this time O-Hana kept to this mode, and caused it to be adopted by many of her friends.

CHAPTER VIII.

OLD CUSTOMS AND NEW IDEAS.

Invitation to a Wedding—The New Laws—The Custom of Adoption of Children—Marriage and Divorce—A Succession of Illegitimate Wives—An Anecdote characteristic of the Japanese Phasis of Mind—Mitani is not satisfied with the New Ideas.

SOME time after this, a neighbour came to announce his marriage and invite the family to the fêtes which, among the rich, accompany this solemnity.

The young bride elect had often met "the Japanese brothers" at Mitani's, and, being already old acquaintances, we were accordingly included in the invitation.

"Come," she said to us earnestly, "my parents will be happy and feel honoured too to receive you."

We had longed for an occasion of seeing intimately these ceremonies, of which, in the course of a few years perhaps, nothing but the remembrance will remain. Without pledging ourselves

definitely, we duly thanked the amiable young lady, promising to do our best to be enabled to avail ourselves of her gracious invitation. Ouyeno had just arrived. I well knew his weakness for innovations, and it was an excellent opportunity to draw out his animated speeches, often tiresome, it is true, yet always instructive.

"Do you think," I asked, "that they will readily accept the modifications that are shortly to be made here in the civil law?"

To my great astonishment, the *employé* remained quite mute, appearing, like the sage in Holy Writ, to be turning his tongue seven times before giving a reply.

The master of the house looked up and, as if the question had been addressed to him, began :

"The two Frenchmen sent here at the Emperor's request to make laws for us, are now at their work, they say. I have no idea what the result will be. My son-in-law is aware," he added, looking at the *employé*, "that I am not opposed to the Government—still——" and here he paused.

My question had stirred up a hornets' nest, and I perceived this too late. It was a question that had, no doubt, been the occasion more than once of warm discussion between the champion of the school of new ideas and the representative of old institutions—between the son-in-law and the father-in-law.

Two French jurists, called hither by his majesty the Mikado, to draw up for his good people a code after the model of the *Code Napoléon*, had been

actually engaged in framing new laws ; but these laws were far from being promulgated, and certain malcontents went so far as to express their doubts on the opportuneness of this grand and costly work.

The social state—the corner-stone, the foundation of every social edifice—was not then, nor is it yet, established in a uniform manner. Instead of being placed under the guardianship of the law, it exists only in the family, and is, consequently, ill-defined and unsettled. And, considering certain customs that can be modified only in the slow course of time, it is a question grave and difficult to solve. If we examine, in fact, the first of these laws relating to the social state—the regulations regarding the settlement of births—we shall find at once a complication resulting from the practice of adoption.

In Japan there are few families without an adopted child. Two near neighbours mutually adopt a child ; it is an exchange quite natural, one that is not hampered with any restriction, nor subject to any condition of age or other reservations, as in France. This is the ordinary way of bringing up a youth as a husband for the daughter of the house ; it is frequently done for the pleasure of the society, and occasionally, simply to gratify a caprice or to comply with a general practice, the custom being highly esteemed and deeply rooted in the country.

In leaving the practice of adoption free on so vast a scale, the certificate of birth that fixes in a

certain way the rights of the natural family, would, for half of the population at least, be but a first step, destined to be soon passed in order to enter into the social family.

And from this, in the opinion of competent judges, serious complications would arise and long be the cause of the most deplorable errors and confusion.

Our jurists will undoubtedly find the means of accommodating these customs, which are deserving of respect ; but meanwhile, the old law is the only one in force, a patriarchal law in all its rigour, by virtue of which the father of the family is sovereign master and judge, without appeal, of every matter in question arising in the household.

If we then stop to consider another of the laws of the social state which, on account of its consequences, is one of the highest importance—the law of marriage it is I allude to—we shall find ourselves hemmed in with difficulties of another kind ; we have to approach customs quite irreconcilable with our laws.

And herein the difficulties are much more complex, arising from the circumstances that, in Japan, though polygamy is prohibited and divorce rare, and the classes the most accessible to our observation are little disposed to change their wives divorce, nevertheless, is permitted by the law, and a semi-official concubinage is quite admitted under the husband's roof.

To suppress divorce would be illogical when certain high-minded thinkers recognise the neces-

sity of making it legally effective in countries where it has not yet arrived at this stage. To prohibit concubinage in the sanctuary of the family is sufficient, and this would not be difficult.

Marriage in Japan has neither the sanction nor the protection of the law. It begins in love, or as a convenient arrangement; children draw the bonds closer together, and friendship, esteem, or merely habit, make the connubial state enduring.

In the union of man and wife there is no intervention, either of the representative of the human law or of the minister of the Divine law. If a young man desires to marry a young girl, he either goes or sends a deputy to the parents of the young girl to demand her hand. If the offer is accepted, the future husband makes presents, and after this procedure, the pair, according to custom, are united. The bridegroom's presents consist of dress and jewellery, the quality of which is in proportion to his fortune. Generally they are a robe of white silk, a piece of silk of the same colour, and a girdle embroidered with gold, for the young girl. The mother-in-law also receives a robe of white silk, and the father-in-law a rich sabre. The robes must not be folded.

The father-in-law gives presents of equal value to his future son-in-law, provided he has the means, but he never, in any case, gives any portion to his daughter—the latter bringing only to the possession in common two silk dresses sewn together in a special mode, two girdles, a complete costume for occasions of ceremony, a fan, five or seven

pocket-books, and the little sabre destined to defend her honour, if ever assailed.

The day is fixed for completing the marriage; the parents, friends, and neighbours are brought together for this occasion at a grand banquet. The young man presents to them the woman he has chosen for his legitimate wife, and the marriage is made.

From this moment the woman belongs to him. She instals herself in the house, and takes the first place there. If the husband thinks proper to take an illegitimate companion, a *mekaké*, he may do so without having divorced his legitimate wife; he may even, if his fortune permits it, furnish himself with an actual hareem. Every new-comer quietly takes her rank in the house according to the date of her arrival—she is the second, the third, or the tenth, but is never subject to the will and caprice of those who have preceded her.

As to the children, they are all legitimate, and whatever may be the position of their mother in order of time, their rights are coequal, and they remain, whatever may arise subsequently, the exclusive property of the father.

In order to get rid of a legitimate wife there is no necessity to have recourse to the law-court; a simple letter is quite sufficient—the *mikoudarihan*, literally, three lines and a half. "I announce," the husband writes, "that the named . . . who has been my wife, is, from this day forth, no longer so, and that she is perfectly free to marry again, or do whatever she thinks proper."

This is business-like, prose with a vengeance ; all the glowing poesy of a first love seems to have been wrung out of these lines with a ruthless hand. It looks as if the Japanese had borrowed its style from certain announcements advertised occasionally in the English and French provincial press, when a wife runs away and runs up bills distasteful to her abandoned lord.

Furnished with this certificate, the wife packs up her clothes and trifles belonging to her, and, leaving her children to their father, whose duty it is to bring them up properly, she goes her way in search of a happier fate.

In the presence of such a state of things, the moralist, shocked at human depravity, covers his face with his hands and denounces the iniquity.

If it is iniquitous it is much less so than the judicial separation ; less iniquitous than that blind, senseless law that obliges a respectable man, whose good name has been sullied by an abandoned hussy, to sacrifice his honour—his whole life in fact, or resort to the terrible alternative to kill the wretch ; less iniquitous than that repulsive social covenant compelling the mother of a family to live under the roof of a libertine, and sometimes a criminal. And yet in this country of Japan, where a man may any day repudiate a wife that is simply distasteful to him, the number of divorces in a year is far less than that of judicial separations in France in the space of three months.

Is there any need after this to speak of the practice that permits concubines to be admitted

into the conjugal household? Everybody knows that it is a license unknown among the middle and lower classes, and that under the influence of Europeans the practice is daily becoming more rare among the nobles—the only class who could indulge in so costly a luxury.

Why, then, trouble oneself about the success of the measures? they would ask. Why doubt the popularity of the projects recently elaborated? In a society where, with quasi-oriental laws, things are done in fact pretty much the same as in France, by individual will alone, it would suffice to sanction the customs of the majority rendering them obligatory for all; in short, it would be necessary to regulate marriage and render it sacred by placing it under the guardianship of the law.

Here is the mistake. It is human nature itself to hanker after forbidden fruit, and since the Fall we poor misguided creatures still find a lurking attraction less in pleasures freely proffered than in those won with sacrifice or danger. Besides, the Japanese, who readily conforms to customs the observation of which is voluntary, would make a stand against the same tradition imposed by law and complicated with formalities—formalities that are very useful, no doubt, but the necessity and purport of which are not by him clearly perceived.

In speaking of formalities it reminds me of an anecdote related to me by one who had it, he said, from one of the professors of law charged with the drawing up of the Code at Yedo. This anecdote, the truth of which I have no reason to doubt,

would amply prove how little the Japanese, even the educated Japanese, is capable of seizing the importance of those details that cling around the most ordinary decree like an inextricable net.

In a course of lectures delivered to the principal magistrates of Yedo on the decrees of the social state in general and relating to marriage specially, this professor had remarked that the publication was made by means of announcements posted up at the mayoralty-house. He had mentioned incidentally that, in order to preserve these announcements from the effects of the weather and keep them beyond the reach of mischievous street-boys, they were put into wooden frames and covered with wire netting.

At the end of the lecture the senior magistrate, according to custom, went up to the professor to call his attention to the points of his lecture that were obscure to him and his colleagues, and which required careful explanation.

"We have understood perfectly," he said, "everything you have taken the trouble to teach us to-day. There is one thing however, that troubles our heads: What is the shape of the frame you referred to, and what kind of wood is it made of?"

This question, which one would fancy was prompted by a facetious spirit rather than a simple mind, is the sincere expression of Japanese notions. Thoroughly well disposed, they are far indeed from understanding the importance of precautions and restrictions which we so copiously draw around us in France; and since, on the other hand, they

are convinced of the excellence of our instruction, they look out in it for the *petite bête*, and find something that seems to us droll, but which does not appear to them more extraordinary than the rest.

The good, simple-hearted people! And their Emperor, forsooth, wants to make Europeans of them! They are submissive to a fault to the will of this demi-god; but for all that, care should be taken not to break through their customs and habits with too rough and unsparing a hand, and not to attempt to change, in the space of a day, the manners of the people that have endured for centuries—modes of life which time alone can modify.

"Do you know," cried Mitani, to whom the discussion of the last few moments seemed to have been as irritating as a bunch of nettles, "do you know where all your innovations are landing us? Therefore I am not going to dissimulate my way of thinking before my son-in-law, for whom I am already a Reactionist. They are leading us on with an unmistakable fatality to confusion, to disorder, to revolt against the law and authority, and will finally leave us relapsing into barbarism. It is evident we had need of certain reforms, to maintain our position and to defend ourselves when there is occasion for it against aggressive neighbours. We wanted arms of precision, and soldiers trained to the use of these arms. France has furnished us with the material and the instructors. We wanted a fleet. The French are showing us

how to construct war-ships, and the English are training for us the sailors. We were behindhand in scientific knowledge. The people of Europe are in rivalry to furnish us with professors in every department of learning. We are making progress in profiting by your knowledge, and we are remoulding and improving ourselves with astonishing rapidity. But what is the reason of all this—the object of this policy? Because we have a certain facility, which is readily recognised; because we have a great desire to learn and they to teach us; but it is due also, and more particularly, to our passive obedience, and to sentiments of unbounded respect, a respect we have already vowed for our sovereign.

“But man is inconstant—he gets tired of everything. Already, the Mikado no longer excites that superstitious dread that was inspired by the ‘Son of Heaven.’ He has come down from his firmament, and shown himself to the people like other mortals. The people, wondering at this strange condescension, incredulous of it at first, have said: ‘It is not he;’ then they believed, and got used to looking at this majesty in the face, and find him no longer so terrible.

“In the present day the immortal chief of ‘the Empire of the Rising Sun’ is a man respected and obeyed, but he is now no more a worshipped god. If the day should come when this man oversteps those bounds that are called the limits of his rights—if the time should come when his good people will perceive that they can, without being con-

founded, refuse to obey—then indeed it will be terrible. I shall have lived long enough, for I should shudder at being a witness of what will then come to pass.

“Pray excuse my warmth, gentlemen. Ouyeno is silent, and seems to dissent. May he never be forced to recognise the truth of my words!”

We could find nothing to say in response; we were struck with the good sense of this straightforward man. Still, whilst sharing perhaps, his opinion, we could not, as Europeans, fully agree with him in everything. Ouyeno was not disposed to provoke any irritating dissent, and, in his own breast quite as much convinced perhaps, as his father-in-law, he appeared as embarrassed as ourselves.

O-Hana, with her childlike prattle, that seemed to undermine the gravity of the discussion, quickly relieved us from our uncomfortable situation.

“You must come,” she said, addressing my friend, “to O-Tchika-san’s wedding. You have no excuse whatever to make. The ceremony will take place at Yokohama or in the neighbourhood. You will not even want special leave from your commander.”

CHAPTER IX.

A WEDDING IN THE OLD STYLE.

The Mississippi Valley — A Marriage according to the
Ancient Custom of Japan—The Fête.

THE desire expressed by Mademoiselle O-Hana was a command for our lover. He would obey, *cela va sans dire*, and I promised to accompany him.

The parents of the bridegroom were rich silk-merchants of Yokohama, and possessed, at a short distance from the city, not far from Mitani's little house in the charming Mississippi valley, a delightful Japanese villa.

And here was to take place the wedding fêtes of their son, according to the ancient custom of the country.

On the appointed day we duly presented ourselves at the place indicated. It was a lovely morning of the month of April ; Nature, at the awakening of spring, was smiling in every nook and corner. In the midst of a group of trees afar off, we caught a glimpse of clusters of gay banners

fluttering at the sport of the breeze, and we could already hear the lively notes of the *chamice*. Then, at the turn of the road, the little *yasiki* came into view, among a host of pavilions, banners, lanterns and garlands.

When we alighted on the white *tatami*, placed before the house, most of the company, arrived before us, already occupied their places in the grand room decorated for the ceremony. O-Hana greeted us across the party with the happiest smile.

Two friends of the bridegroom, delegated by him, have gone in great pomp to bring the bride to his parents, and we are waiting only for her. A *betto* sent as a scout soon comes in, panting for breath; she is on her way, and now the queen of the day is close at hand.

While they are giving the last touches to the arrangements in the interior to receive the bride with due honour, two *kosukai* (servants), a man and a woman, each furnished with a lighted torch and a mortar to crush the rice, are placing themselves as vedettes on each side of the entrance door.

Just as the young girl is stepping over the threshold of her new home, the rice in the two mortars, a symbol of daily life and work, is mingled in a single recipient, and the torches, emblematic of ardent love, are brought together to form in their union but a single flame.

These emblems of the mystic union about to be accomplished stir the feelings with their simplicity;

but, without being able, unfortunately, to understand the reason, these torches were extinguished immediately after having been united. Could it be an ironical signification of the ephemeral existence of conjugal love? It is quite possible, for the Japanese are shrewd observers, and practical enough not to overlook the slightest significant detail.

For my part I prefer more ideal poesy; why not, for instance, leave the torches burning together to the end, and consume themselves thus in close union? Perhaps this is a mere figment which we accept as a cherished detail of real life, but it seems to me cruel to darken with the cloud of doubt the glowing word of love, which should, in every language and in every land, accompany the sweet illusion of "always and for ever."

But I am wandering from the wedding.

The young girl, arrayed like a shrine on a fête, her head covered with a long veil of white silk, is introduced, trembling all over, into the room where the guests are waiting. The father of the bridegroom gallantly leads the timid creature to the seat of honour she is to occupy during the ceremony, while the bridegroom modestly seats himself lower down, humbly keeping his eyes on the ground.

On the raised part of the floor of the room are laid out several dishes; one supports a cage containing a pair of wagtails, others contain poultry, fish, all kinds of cakes, two phials of *saké*, three cups superposed, and finally a kettle to heat the *saké*.

Whilst the young ladies are arranging in proper order these emblematic victuals, the married women take charge of the bride and lead her into a room set apart for giving the last touches to her *toilette*, availing themselves, no doubt, of the occasion to give seasonable advice on the etiquette to be observed towards the husband.

When this important operation is finished, they return to the company; two matrons take the phials of *saké*, each surmounted with a paper butterfly. These insects, naturally, are of each sex—the Japanese never overlook this circumstance, even in their paper puppets. The pair of butterflies are then placed on the floor one over the other.

So soon as the two phials are uncorked, the elder of the two matrons takes one in each hand and the other takes the kettle; the *saké* from the two phials is mixed, and the kettle then carried and placed with the greatest care over a lighted *tchibatchi*. So soon as the liquor boils, the lady, who has emptied the phials into the kettle, takes the tray bearing the three superposed cups, fills the first and presents it to the husband. Then a course of libations commences and continues incessantly; the bride and bridegroom take each nine cups of *saké*, and drink alternately three cups in succession, at first using the first cup, then the second, and finally the third. At this stage Marcel and I began to speculate on the possible condition of the happy pair before the ending of the ceremony, and felt uneasy for the anticipated consequences. But

O-Hana reassured us by explaining that, if they were obliged according to the rites to drink a certain number of cups, they were not obliged to fill them, and in fact, after all, the married pair had not imbibed more than half a phial of *saké*.

The *saké*, moreover, is a liquor almost harmless. It is a kind of brandy very weak, made from rice, and so well watered that one may take a very liberal quantity before arriving at the happy stage of being "in one's cups." It is very uncommon to see a Japanese really intoxicated; when sometimes, however, he is what we call *un peu lancé*, he generally preserves a certain decorum that would shame the drunkards of our country, if drunkenness were susceptible of shame.

It must not be supposed, however, that this reserve and this sobriety has always prevailed in Japan. They say, even, that formerly—though I suppose it is a mere legend—the vine was cultivated here on a vast scale, and the divine juice of the grape—*boudo-no-saké*—so copiously indulged in, that a stern Tycoon, fearing the fatal progress of drunkenness, published a decree ordering the rooting-up of all the vines in the Empire, with liberty at the same time to preserve a single vine only to each house.

However reasonable this edict may have seemed, it appears to me all the more unfortunate, inasmuch as, wine has never been a cause of decadence of nations, and, judging from the grapes I have tasted in Japan, their produce ought to be delicious.

But now the liberal and enlightened government of his majesty the Mikado has entered on a road of actual progress, he encourages particularly agriculture, and has given orders for the planting of vines wherever there is a chance of their thriving; in the course of a few years, therefore, we may hope to have the gratification of tasting this nectar which—if the legend is to be credited—has for the last five or six centuries been drawing Japan to its ruin.

But to return again to the wedding: the first part of the ceremony is finished; in waiting for the second act, whilst every one is in conversation, munching little cakes to sustain the appetite, the real repast of the wedding is being prepared and the *couvert* is laid in the same room.

The repast is composed of three courses: the first of these consists of seven dishes; the second of five; and at last, the third of three dishes.

What joy for the god, if, like him of the poet, he rejoices in an odd number,* for it must be observed that all the principal and characteristic incidents of the ceremony have been repeated three, five, seven, or nine times!

This *menu pantagruélique*, composed chiefly of fish prepared in different ways, occupied us till three o'clock in the afternoon; a well-sustained and becoming gaiety never ceased to reign among the guests in spite of the continuous libations.

After several speeches, appropriate to the occa-

* Numero Deus impare gaudet. . . .

sion, female vocalists and dancers are introduced; then the fête becomes more lively, keeping at the same time within the bounds of strict propriety; the songs are praises addressed to the newly-married pair, predictions of prosperity, and of fruitfulness and love included; the dances, to us more expressive than the music, of which we did not understand a great deal, reproduced in a very exact mimicry the different stages of conjugal life.

In this way time passes very quickly; it is already late, but the hour at which the married pair may retire to their nuptial chamber is not yet arrived. We consider it, however, time to rise and withdraw, and, after having thanked our hosts for their gracious and courteous hospitality, we take our road, about five in the evening, to Yokohama, delighted with our day's entertainment and pleased beyond measure in having been enabled to assist at this curious and patriarchal ceremony.

CHAPTER X.

THE STORY OF THE FORTY-SEVEN RONIN.

A Short Historical Summary—Departure for Nikko—Kanda-bachi-outchi—Means of Travelling in Japan Now and Formerly—The *Djin-riki-cha*—Sengakoudji—A Story to make one's Hair stand on End—The *Harakiri*.

ON stepping on board, we found a pleasure party had been definitely arranged. One of our friends from Yedo, having arrived during our absence, came to ask us to join an excursion to Nikko. The commander then gives four *permissions d'absence*: the doctor and the engineer, quite enthusiastic at the prospect, have decided on a day's pleasure, and are waiting only for "the Japanese brothers" to make application for the passports.

Nikko is the spot where reposes in his eternal slumber the great Iyeyas, the first Tycoon of the dynasty of the Tokoungawa, who was the most glorious and the most prosperous.

During a very long time the Mikado used to send every year a deputation of high personages,

accompanied by a numerous suite of *samourai*, to do homage at the tomb of the divine Iyeyas and bear presents to his temple. This pious custom at present, I believe, has fallen into disuse, and this temple, though not completely abandoned, has felt the effects of religious indifference. It is one quite as remarkable for the richness of its decoration as for its association with momentous historical events.

The sanctuary was esteemed as a holy place at an epoch long before Iyeyas. A Buddhist priest, named Chodo-chonin, in making a pilgrimage there about 767 A.D., brought it into vogue.

The mountains of Nikko, situated at thirty-six and a half *ri** from Yedo, on the north-eastern border of the province of Chimotzuké, were formerly called "the mountains of the two tempests," on account of the hurricanes which come periodically twice a year, in the spring and in the autumn, to ravage this land. In A.D. 820 the priest Konkai gave to these mountains the name they now bear, which signifies "mountains of the sun's brightness."

In 1616, at the time when the grand priest Tenkar, who was subsequently numbered among the saints of Buddha, ruled the community of priests of Nikko, the Tykoon Hidétada, successor to the glorious Iyeyas, sent two dignitaries of his court in search of a place worthy to receive the sacred remains of his illustrious predecessor.

* A *ri* is 3,415 yards, nearly two miles.

After long wandering and minute survey, the Prince's officers fixed their choice on the southern side of the hill Hotoke-iwa.

On the twenty-first day of the ninth month they returned to Yedo, where they were met with the congratulations of their master and rewarded with fresh honours and princely gifts.

The building of the mausoleum, immediately begun, was finished in three months. The body of Iyeyas, transported to its last dwelling-place with extraordinary pomp, was deified shortly after by the decree of the Mikado. Religious fêtes accompanied this deification, now become legendary. They were presided over by a priest of the Imperial family and attended by the highest nobles of the Empire.

The decree proclaiming the deification of the holy and much-venerated Tykoon was read 10,000 times in two days, to the people, by a multitude of priests assembled for the occasion.

Tenkar died in 1644, and was succeeded by Mowzaki. The year following, in remembrance of the glory that Iyeyas had acquired by his military successes in the provinces of the East, which he had pacified, the Emperor named the temple *Go-to-sho*, Palace of the East. The administration of Mowzaki lasted only ten years, after which it devolved on Kiyoto; a fifth son of the Mikado succeeded him, and from this time to the revolution of 1868, the bonzery of Nikko has never ceased to be distinguished in its superior by a priest of the Imperial blood. This priest resided

at the Tykoon's court at Yedo, and came only to Nikko three times a year—the first day of the year, some time during the fourth month, and finally in the ninth.

In 1868 this prince-priest became the sport of the revolution. Raised to the throne by the partisans of the reigning Tykoon, he was proclaimed Mikado ; but this ephemeral royalty had a very brief existence. The legitimate Government, on vindicating its authority, exercised forbearance, and the life of the inoffensive usurper was spared. The administration thought it prudent however, to give him a change of air, and accordingly sent him to a German university, where he now meditates at his leisure on the vicissitudes of human life and the ludicrous inconstancy of fate, that offers you a crown one day only to take it away the next.

This interesting historical summary by our friend, rendered in a manner so clear and striking, would have induced us to decide on the visit, if I had not otherwise been disposed. Marcel, to my great astonishment, also accepted the invitation without a sign of tergiversation. The preparations for departure are therefore made with great spirit ; a simple portmanteau being sufficient for a change of clothing for us two. The commander's permission is obtained ; the passports sent to the Japanese Government at Yokohama are duly received with its visa ; a note intimating a few days' absence is forwarded to Mitani's house, and at eight o'clock the little party start by the last train leaving Yokohama.

The journey from Yokohama to Yedo is not long. Time passes in lively conversation, with the rapidity of the engine fleeing before us, and we soon arrive at our friend's delightful dwelling at Kanda-bachi-outchi, where we find an excellent supper elaborately prepared for us and down beds for our repose. By midnight every one is asleep.

We are to make the journey in *djin-riki-cha*. The means of travelling employed formerly in Japan were pretty much on an equality for inflicting discomfort. At first it was the oxen-car, some specimens of which may be still seen in its present character of curiosity (its use being reserved for the nobility); then the *koci*, a kind of sedan of lacquer with two poles; finally the *norimono*, another chair, carried by a single pole passed slantingly through a ring at the top of the roof. These vehicles, extremely inconvenient for Europeans on account of the squatting position they are obliged to endure in them, are comfortable *coupés* in comparison with the *kango*. This conveyance, which answers in Japan to the common Parisian cab, is rather difficult to describe. It is a kind of basket of plaited bamboo thongs, about twenty-eight inches high, twenty-four long, and sixteen wide, entirely open on one side and furnished with a little mattress of cotton. The open side may be closed by a curtain of oiled paper; the closed side is a network of thin bamboo, through which the occupant may see without himself being seen. One naturally wonders, on glancing at the modicum of space at the traveller's disposal, how he can pos-

sibly rest in it without rolling himself up like a terrified hedgehog.

Travellers may still ride on horseback or go in a boat, but it is almost needless to mention these two kinds of locomotion, because the first is all but exclusively reserved for military men, and the other necessarily only adapted to a very small extent of the country.

The carriage, such as we understand by a carriage in Europe, was then totally unknown; moreover, I hardly know how the straw-socks, in place of iron shoes, would permit the horses to trot with freedom, and, in any case, to perform a long journey.

But, at the present day, one travels in Japan—at least, in the provinces transformed by modern ideas—as elsewhere in civilised countries. Two main lines of railway have been open many years, viz. from Kobé to Osaka, and from Yokohama to Yedo, and recently a third line from Osaka to Kiôto. So soon as the financial position of the country will admit of the extension, in connecting Kobé with Simonesaki and Kiôto to Yokohama, one may then travel from one end to the other of the great island of Nippon without changing carriages, and accomplish this journey, only lately obstructed with all kinds of difficulties, with as much ease as that from Paris to Marseilles.

Carriages are always scarce, horses are not yet numerous enough to be employed in this service, and hitherto the rich only can afford this costly luxury. A few omnibuses have made their ap-

pearance at Yedo, it is true, but they do not suffice for the ten-thousandth part of the population. The *koci* and the *norimono* have entirely ceased to run. The *kango* is seen only in outlandish and mountainous districts. What then is the vehicle in common use adapted to the exigencies of every purse?

It is the *djin-riki-cha*, and word for word it signifies "carriage drawn by man." It is a little cabriolet, the first models of which were seen at the Paris Exhibition of 1867, and since that time, hundreds of thousands of these vehicles are in daily movement over a part of the extreme East, having in China replaced the barrow, and in Japan the *kango*. This little conveyance, in which two may sometimes sit, though with very sensible squeezing, no doubt, is generally drawn by a single man. In large cities like Yedo, where the distances to accomplish are long, and when it is anywhere a journey of some days, the man drawing takes a helper, who, according to circumstances, harnesses himself in tandem, or places himself behind the vehicle, either to push it on, or, in too steep a descent, to hold it back.

However primitive this vehicle may appear at first sight, its accommodation is not so disagreeable. It was in this conveyance that I made all my journeys in Japan, by day and night, in all sorts of weather. Rain, sun, or cold has never stopped my movement. With a great Japanese umbrella, a good reserve of rugs and oiled-paper curtains, one therein may brave the elements.

The ordinary distance accomplished by the drawing-man is three miles an hour, but on dry, level roads, these indefatigable poor devils, called *djin-ri' ki*, run like racers; this advantage, however, is balanced by a loss on mounting or on setting foot on muddy roads. With all its defects, this mode of journeying is sufficiently rapid and comfortable enough for people like us, desirous of seeing the country, and who have long learnt to be satisfied with little.

The fare varies according to the district, and also according to circumstances, but it seldom exceeds a *bou* per *ri*, and I have even very often made a bargain at five *cents** the *ri* for one man.

As in France, there are free cabs, not subject to the fixed tariff, as well as the public cabs that are, so in Japan there are independent *djin-ri' ki*, with whom any one may make a bargain in advance, and others, servants of companies, who must be paid by the official scale.

It sometimes happened for me to have recourse to the latter, but experience has taught me that it is far better to avoid dealing with the companies as much as possible, who, in appropriating a considerable share of the proceeds of letting, can only employ men already half knocked-up through fatigue, ready to accept lower remuneration. Our host, therefore, thoroughly well up in the mysteries of the craft, was too knowing to treat with the

* The *cent* is the hundredth part of the *ryo*, and of the proximate value of a halfpenny.

grand company of *djin-riki-cha* of Yedo. They were "independents," with robust limbs, that were to take us to Nikko, and with relays duly pre-arranged, would gain at least a day over the company's trucks.

The following morning we turned out at six, and after a quick breakfast started.

Our caravan had quite an imposing effect : eight *djin-riki-cha*, each drawn by two men, five for us and three for the luggage and provisions.

The evening before, some one had mentioned he would "*s'ouvrir le ventre*" rather than forego the pleasure of the trip. This pleasantry recalled to memory the fate of the forty-seven *ronin* of Asano-takoumi-no-kami, whose remains repose at Sengakoudji. This temple, become famous on account of the hecatomb that took place there, deserves a special notice. We had overlooked it in our first excursion to Yedo, and now agreed to make a pilgrimage there before setting out for Nikko.

"You know, I dare say," began our Amphitryon, on entering Sengakoudji, "the history of the forty-seven heroes, who came here to put an end to their lives, but probably not all the touching circumstances of it which I will now relate.

"Sengakoudji recalls one of the most characteristic traits of the history of Japanese chivalry. This trait reveals to us the sublime exaggeration to which this society, essentially warlike and descended from the gods, pushed the point of honour.

"Do you see that long line of mausoleums, giving to this temple the aspect of a vast and imposing group of sepulchres? They are the tombs of the forty-seven *ronin* of Asano-takoumi-no-kami.

"The word *ronin* is, in its etymology, full of expressive poesy. It means 'the wave man,'—that the man whose life is delivered over to the caprice of fate, is agitated like the billows in the tempest.

"And they called *ronin* the noble warriors who, separated from their suzerain by any catastrophe, lived as knights-errant, and who in the place of riches are endowed only with their courage and their swords.

"Asano-takoumi-no-kami, daimio of one of the noblest houses of Japan, having been insulted by another daimio, named Kotsuké-no-suké, could not endure the wrong, and in a transport of rage hurled his dagger in his aggressor's face. The blow, ill-directed, made only a scratch, but Kotsuké-no-suké, being an officer of the Tycoon's court, caused Asano to be arrested by his guards, and, cowardly exercising his influence, obtained against him a condemnation to death by the *harakiri*.*

"And Asano gave himself bravely the death-blow, in accordance with the rules of Japanese chivalry; his property consequently was confiscated, his ruined family obliged to hide their

* Solemn and official suicide of the *samourai*.

wretchedness in obscurity, and his military house was broken up.

"From that time, his faithful servitors and adherents, suddenly dispersed, became *ronin*.

"Here it is that appears one of the purest types of those fantastic personages, whose savage and heroic virtues are so much admired in Japan; one of those grand figures so often represented on the stage—a complete personification of the blind devotion of the vassal, of duty and self-abnegation carried beyond the limits of possible reality.

"Kouranosouké, chief officer of the noble Asano, his intimate confidant, his respected friend, after having assisted his well-beloved lord in the horrible act of the *harakiri*, swore on his venerated head an implacable hatred towards Kotsuké and his race. Then, when he had rendered the last duties to the mutilated corpse, he departs from the *yasiki*, his heart weighed down with sorrow, but his breast swelling with vengeance.

"Forty-five of the noblest and bravest among the *samourai* of Asano follow him, and, confident in his tried bravery, ability, and sagacity, they enlist under his banner, that they may work together with the sole aim of avenging the honour of their fallen house.

"Thenceforth, these forty-six men live but for one object, cherish but a single idea—to seize Kotsuké, cut off his head and offer it in a holocaust to the manes of their master.

"But the task is difficult. Kotsuké, as powerful as he is cowardly, doubles the guards of his

yasiki and surrounds himself with so many precautions that it is impossible for the most reckless to gain access to him.

"Kouranosouké perceives that the moment is not propitious, that he must wait and resort to stratagem.

"After having given a pass-word to his companions, he advises them to disperse and keep apart throughout the empire, but to hold themselves in readiness to rally on the first notice of assembling. He himself quits Yedo, leaving with his family, taking with him his most precious objects, and goes far from the scene wherein, some future day, he will be the chief actor.

"He conveys his household goods to Kiôto; there, at least, he will be forgotten; the remembrance of the murder of Asano will gradually fade away in men's minds, and the murderer, emboldened through the inactivity of the *ronin* of his victim, will be lulled in unsuspected security.

"Shortly, however, Kouranosouké, apparently having forgotten his projects of vengeance, gives himself up to the most reckless intemperance; he passes his life in disreputable quarters, rolls helplessly drunk into the gutters, and scandalises all Kiôto by the spectacle of his brutish demeanour. His friends and companions in arms remonstrate with him in vain; the tender reproaches of his faithful wife, the devoted mother of his children, are equally unavailing; the fallen warrior remains insensible to everything. One day, in a moment of rage, he turns the whole family out of

doors, keeping with him only his eldest son, the young O-Ichi-tchikara. Then, nothing whatever restrains his excesses; he falls lower and lower and to such a degree of degradation, that all feeling of honour seems to have withered up in his heart; the most deliberate insults, the most humiliating indignities are hurled in his face; a *samourai* spits in his face, tramples on him with disgust, overloads him with contempt and the grossest epithets. Kouranosouké still remains insensible to all this usage; they now regard him with pity, for he seems no longer a man, only an ignoble brute, whom any one may kick without fear of encountering his teeth.

"Kotsuké for many months had kept himself on the defensive, but at last, tired of remaining indefinitely on a war footing for which there seemed to be no further motive, ashamed perhaps also of having betrayed fears so ill-founded, he decides on resuming his ordinary course of life, and accordingly dismisses the supernumerary guards with which he had so long surrounded himself.

"This was precisely the opportunity Kouranosouké had been waiting for—the long longed-for hour of vengeance. The drunkard, the libertine, the degraded being who had suffered himself to be spat on without resenting the affront, disappears suddenly from Kiôto. No one cares to notice his absence; the filthy brute, they conclude, has finished his ignoble existence on some dung-hill.

"But during the last week the young O-Ichit-chikara has been in the country giving the signal to rally ; he has succeeded in bringing together his father's old companions in arms, and, at the hour appointed by the son, Kouranosouké, the valiant warrior of old, presents himself to his sworn confederates under the walls of Yedo.

"The forty-six *ronin* recognise one another, and the completion of their number, O-Ichit-chikara making the forty-seventh. They renew their oaths, address to the gods a short prayer, and then, without losing a moment, take their way with the most watchful precautions to the *yasiki* of Kotsuké.

"It is a dark winter's night ; a violent storm rages, and pelts them pitilessly with whirling clouds of snow. They can hardly grope their way through that darkness to which the lugubrious howling of the tempest gives a sensation of horror.

"When a flash of lightning darts from a cloud, throwing its pale transient gleam around, figures may be discerned creeping along the walls and shrinking behind the shadows of the trees ; this is the resolute band stealing on their tortuous way.

"Presently loud cries rend the air, mingled with the clashing of arms. The guard of Kotsuké, taken by surprise, are maintaining against the *ronin* of Asano a desperate combat, but nothing can resist this unforeseen attack, the impetuous bravery of Kouranosouké and his companions.

"The guards, conquered, disarmed, annihilated, leave the way free.

"Kotsuké, starting up from sleep in this uproar, unmanned with terror, tries to escape, but the instant he is about to vanish through a secret doorway, a hand of iron falls on his shoulder and fixes him to the spot ; he is then dragged along to the state apartment.

" 'Do you recognise me, Prince ?' demands the chief of the *ronin*. 'I am Kouranosouké ; it is I who received in my arms the dear head of the illustrious Asano-takoumi-no-kami ; it is I who have sworn on the throbbing remains of this great man to avenge his death, and offer to his manes your lordship's head.'

"On pronouncing these words the terrible *samouraï* presented a poignard to his enemy, and begged him in the most respectful manner to have the goodness to carry into execution on his person the *harakiri* there and then. Kotsuké takes the instrument of capital punishment with a trembling hand, looks at it, his eyes starting from his head with terror, and seems not to realise the summary sentence that has just been pronounced against him.

"While he is hesitating, Kouranosouké, impatient to arrive at the object he has pursued with such noble spirit and perseverance, brandishes his sabre in the air and with one blow severs the head of the coward incapable of giving himself a soldier's death.

"This execution carried out, the forty-seven *ronin*, all more or less seriously wounded, abandon the dismantled *yasiki*, taking with them merely the daimio's head.

"At daybreak, when the *bonzes* of Sengakoudji come to open the temple doors, they find the forty-seven warriors lying prostrate on the entrance-steps of the sanctuary.

"The aspect of these men covered with blood and dust is terrible and imposing. One of them, the young O-Ichi-tchikara, is not yet sixteen; his beardless face contrasts with the stern countenances of his hardy companions. A horrible wound is gaping across his chest; but haughty and indomitable, he supports with pride his glorious sufferings; his prepossessing features, now pale from loss of blood, have an exquisite expression of courageous resignation.

"'Brethren,' says the chief of the band to the affrighted priests, throwing them a few handfuls of gold, 'this is all the riches we possess; accept our offering, and open for the companions of the divine Asano the door of their last dwelling-place.'

"The priests, filled with consternation, open the doors and withdraw. When they return they see forty-seven corpses lying bleeding on the floor of the temple; the forty-seven *ronin*, after having saluted the tomb of their master, died each with his own hand.

"The news of this epic carnage spreads throughout the empire like wild-fire. Kourano-souké, whose eccentric conduct then becomes intelligible, reinstated through his heroic sacrifice, becomes a demi-god and his forty-six companions highly-venerated saints.

"The tombs of the heroes soon become the object of a special worship, for everybody is desirous of rendering homage to the brave warriors who did not fear to sacrifice their lives, carried out too with the most touching and sublime abnegation to avenge the honour of their suzerain.

"Pilgrims come here from the most distant provinces. One day a *samourai*, attached to Satsuma, arrives covered with dust; he has come all the way on foot, and, without taking a moment's rest, he enters into the temple of Sengakoudji; then, after having performed his devotions before the statue of Buddha and emptied his purse on the altar steps, he goes to kneel before the tomb of the faithful Kouranosouké, and addressing the image of the hero: 'Noble friend,' he says, 'forgive a poor wretch for having slighted thy great soul, and receive his life in expiation of the unmerited insult he has had the baseness to cast at thee.' On ending these words, the repentant soldier opens his body with a rent and gives up his last sigh, vomiting a ghastly flood of dark gore.

"This *samourai* was he who, one day, at Kiôto, spat in the face of Kouranosouké. He is interred by the side of the forty-seven *ronin*. His tomb puzzles visitors who are but imperfectly acquainted with the history, as they count forty-eight sepulchral stones where they thought of finding no more than forty-seven.

"After the tragedy," added our friend, "and before passing on to more cheerful subjects and

resuming our route, it would be quite *à propos*, I think, to tell you what constitutes the terrible *harakiri*, which has been mentioned in the course of this lugubrious narrative.

"The *harakiri*, called also *seppoukou*, was the mode of suicide adopted by men-at-arms who had voluntarily resolved to put an end to their lives, or had been condemned to death for some offence not of a dishonouring character, and involving neither loss of rank nor military degradation.

"There existed besides, two other modes of carrying out capital punishment; they were strangulation and ordinary decapitation; but these two kinds of execution, stamped with infamy, were never inflicted on a *samourai*, unless he had dishonoured himself as it is understood in Japan.

"The *harakiri* in ancient Japanese society was therefore an institution relatively moral, because in taking the life it did not brand the honour, and had by no means the character of suicide of our European countries.

"This contest of man with himself could neither be compared with our duel, though there exists between the two acts, essentially different, a kind of moral similitude.

"In France, in a certain class of society, the duel, it is true, is the last resort of outraged honour. Still, on this point, opinion is divided: one will turn his head or shrug his shoulders on passing by a man who has been on the ground; another, on the contrary, will press his hand with a marked

sentiment of admiration. People do not all think alike. But in Japan there is nothing like this want of unanimity, for under the ancient *régime*, every Japanese with proper self-respect should be ready, at every moment of his life, to cut himself off from the aggregate number of the population or to serve as a second to a friend.

"The *harakiri* formed in a certain way an essential part of the training of the military class ; and if, in the present day, it is fallen into desuetude, on account of the rapid modification of manners, brought about by the invasion of European ideas, those who have thus terminated their existence are nevertheless revered as saints. I am even quite convinced that a fanatic laying violent hands on himself in this mode, after having committed some crime by the criminal law, entailing in accordance with the new code hard labour for life, would still find at the present day a multitude of admirers, and even other fanatics ready to make of him a demi-god.

"In the *harakiri*, the seconds had a rôle much more important than that of the witnesses in a European duel ; their duty was strictly of an official character, and they were obliged to fulfil it with courage, dexterity, and devotion.

"In accordance with the rules of Japanese chivalry, every daimio was expected to retain among his trusty adherents one man at least capable of serving him efficiently as second, and to attach him specially to his person.

"The ceremonies of the *harakiri* were signalised

with an imposing solemnity, with the object, no doubt, of masking, under the aspect of a fête, the horror and brutality of the deed.

"I am not speaking now of the voluntary *harakiri*, executed anywhere and without preliminaries, with or without the assistance of a second, but of the *harakiri* as a sentence for some offence by a kind of court-martial.

"In this case the condemned was handed over to the custody of a daimio who, while keeping him a prisoner in his *yasiki*, surrounded him with all the respect due to his rank.

"Formerly the executions always took place in the temples; later, and until a recent epoch, they were carried out, according to the rank of the condemned, either in one of the rooms of the *yasiki* of the prince custodian or in his park.

"If we consult the different accounts that have been given of these scenes of butchery, we shall find that they have taken place in the same conditions, and the departures from the regular course have been so unimportant that it will suffice to describe one alone to understand all others.

"Without having ever been present at such a drama, I am happy to say, I have seen many times its exact reproduction at the theatre, with details of harrowing precision.

"It is, for instance, a *harakiri* that is to take place out-of-doors; it is an officer of the second rank who is to suffer at the sanguinary fête.

"The preceding evening an enclosure of about four yards square, open to the north and south, has

been formed in the park with curtains of white silk ; at each of the four corners long pennants, covered with texts from the sacred books, are waving in the air. A wooden doorway, equally covered with white silk, rises at each entrance ; in the centre, on the ground, two new mats, bordered in white, are placed, the one perpendicular to the other.

"The witnesses, named censors, appointed by the Government are arrived, and the daimio has gone in great pomp to receive them at the entrance of the *yasiki*; two torches, for the purpose of lighting up the scene with their flickering and pale glimmer, stand erect on each side of the mats. The preparations are now completed.

"Whilst the culprit, arrayed in dress of gay colours, enters by the north door, the censors, the seconds, and the spectators arrive by the south. Each takes his place etiquette assigns to him ; the condemned sits on the mat turned north and south, with his face turned towards the north ; the censors take their stations on the other mat, and the seconds, whose services are not yet required, place themselves with the spectators:

"The first censor then begins to read the sentence of execution :

"*'Samourai*, you have committed an offence which you cannot wash away ; you are no longer worthy to belong to the noble caste of Japanese chivalry. Through respect for the character with which you are invested you will not be degraded, your name will not be tarnished ; but you are

condemned to put yourself to death according to the prescribed rules and usual ceremonies in such cases.'

"This sentence having been pronounced, the censor retires and finally quits the *yasiki*.

"The culprit, who has just listened to this tirade with an air of unconcerned indifference, rises and goes out, to proceed to a last and solemn attiring, and then in a few moments reappearing in gala raiment, he takes again the place on the mat he has just occupied.

"Then the daimio, the master of the *yasiki*, rises, and addressing his guest: 'Have you any communication to make to me?' he asks.

"'I have nothing to say,' replies the unhappy man; 'and yet, since you have the goodness to interest yourself in my fate, permit him who is about to die to thank you for the handsome conduct you have observed towards him.'

"Such is the ordained response, the classic reply. The only modification thought becoming to make is the following: 'And I most humbly entreat you to convey my last wishes to such a one.'

"The condemned then hands to the daimio a sealed letter. At this moment, while the inferior second presents to the culprit a poignard, called *kou-soun-gobou*, the superior second uncovers the right shoulder, unsheathes his sabre, the scabbard of which he drops on the ground, steps back a pace on the left with a ready and strong arm. The condemned, squatting on his heels in the

Japanese mode, seizes the poignard with his right hand, and without a moment's hesitation plunges it into his abdomen.* With a steady hand he draws slowly the sharpened blade from left to right, and from the upper region to the lower. A crimson flood gushes forth on the mat. The hero, without breathing a sigh, draws out the gory weapon and stretches his arm towards the censors ; this is the signal of the terrible *dénodment*. The premier second brandishes his sabre, the heavy head drops lightly forward, the burnished blade gleams like a flash of lightning, and the head, severed with a single stroke, bounds hideously forward, rolling to the feet of the spectators. Life has departed, but honour remains.

"When the rank of the condemned requires, according to etiquette, that the ceremony should take place within the *yasiki*, everything is observed much in the same manner as in the open air. Instead of mats to receive the actors of the horrible tragedy, they are *f'ton* sewn together, covered with cotton, and laid down on the *tatami*, to preserve them from the stains of blood. The simple flambeaux are sometimes replaced by brighter torches ; but it is in good taste, it seems, to leave the apartment dimly lighted, permitting the condemned to see less distinctly the fearful proceedings, in case his heart should fail at the fatal instant. In such an event, the principal second, who may, it is said, be even warned if

* The blade enters no deeper than an inch.

thought prudent, does not wait to accomplish the sanguinary work till the culprit has inflicted on himself the first blow, but cuts off his head immediately he sees it bent forward."

While we were listening with religious silence, thrilled with this dramatic story, some *bonzes* of inferior rank, accustomed probably to the liberality of tourists, pressed around us very closely, but a few *bou* scattered around soon relieved us at a very slight cost.

In Japan, as in other countries, visitors are always expected on entering places of worship to drop a mite ; there they deposit their offering in the poor-box, or in the silver alms-dish of the building ; here, charity is given to the minister himself, the priest, who generally lives meagrely enough on this pittance, wrung either from the superstition or the complaisance of visitors.

CHAPTER XI.

AN EXCURSION TO NIKKO.

En route — Nikko—Japanese Beds — Excursion to Lake Tchouzenji—An Affecting Story of Naïveté and Fidelity — Japanese Architecture—A Fantastic Bridge — The Temple of Iyeyas—The Exhibition—The Tomb of the Great Man.

IT was half-past eight when we remounted our vehicles, and we had to go from one end to the other of the immense capital in order to reach the high road of Ochiou-kaïdo that leads to Nikko.

From Yedo to Kourihachi the route traverses a monotonous plain ; it is a succession of rice-fields of many leagues, alternating with various vegetables, and the eye, at last getting fatigued with this endless green surface, longs for a bit of diversified nature.

At Kourihachi the scene changes. After having been ferried across the river Tone-gawa, which is about two hundred yards wide, and having reached the village of Nakada, we continue our way

between a double line of pines and larch as far as Koga, our first halting-place, where we pass the night.

At daybreak the following morning, we are again in our carriages. On leaving Koga, the scenery changes; a chain of mountains, blue in the dim distance from which we behold them, run from west to north; they are the mountains of the sunbeams, and there is Nikko. On the east-north-east rises the peak of Tsoukouba. A level road, shaded with majestic trees, takes us as far as Out-sounomya; here the road becomes hilly, and the trees, still more imposing, attaining at least a hundred feet, border a magnificent avenue that falls in with the Reihechi-kādo.

The junction of these two roads forms a large open space, in the centre of which two or three dozen houses are most fancifully disposed, constituting the village of Imaitchi.

We rest a quarter of an hour in this Eden. Five or six cups of tea, brought by the *ne-san** of a neat-looking *tcha-ya*,† are sufficient to refresh our *djin-ri' ki*, and put them into a good humour. We accordingly start again at the rate of three leagues an hour, and soon arrive at Nikko.

Before visiting the temples and other curiosities of Nikko, we decide on making an excursion in the environs of Tchouzenji, and, as the roads in these mountainous parts do not admit of the accommodation of the *djin-riki-cha*, it is afoot with

* Servants.

† Tea-house.

a guide that the country must be traversed, unless we would subject ourselves to the tormenting locomotion of a *kango*. As for me, an indefatigable sportsman, walking is a real pleasure, and I should prefer this method of travelling to all others in my excursions, if time permitted it. But most of my companions, fearing a day's fatigue, wish to prepare themselves for the trip as thoroughly as possible by a good night's rest. Therefore, so soon as we had dined, order was given to the landlady of the hotel to prepare our beds.

A bed in Japan, when the weather is cold, is composed of two or three quilted cotton mattresses, called *f'ton*, raised from the floor on the *tatami*; of a *makoura* (pillow), a kind of little box in lacquer, on which reposes a sort of doll's bolster to support the neck, and not the head; and then of several *mosen* (blankets), with which the sleeper covers himself, and, in addition, with an immense, funereal, wadded *robe de chambre*, in which he previously wraps himself. As to sheets, they are unknown; but they may be found in the hotels daily frequented by Europeans, where the guest may be much worse off and have much more to pay.

But is one comfortable or not in this Japan bed? For my part, I have always found myself very snug in substituting for a *makoura* a rolled-up blanket; with this slight adjustment, I have always found the hard Japanese couch sufficiently easy. But there are probably very sensible degrees

of appreciation, for I have often heard my companions complain bitterly on getting up. Who then sleeps on a bed of roses? One complains that he is chilled by draughts, another that his neck and loins are disjointed; therefore my opinion, I suppose, must be taken *cum grano salis*. In the *yado-ya** of Nikko every one, in spite of everything, slept like a dormouse till daylight, so soundly that, before we had put on our boots, swallowed our breakfast, and prepared our drawing-boards, it was nearly ten o'clock.

We passed in succession, without thinking of stopping, Chitchikentcho, Haramatchi, and Nonobikinotaki; paid a flying visit to the little temple of Kiotake-Kwannon, and arrived about half-past twelve at Mumagaŕchi. From here to the lake the road is really enchanting. It is along the banks of the river Darya-gawa we are now journeying; the stream, diminished to a mere brook at this season, rushes on its zigzag course through a most capricious channel with a certain uproar, and compels us, as we cling to the walls of its precipitous shores, to cross it eight times over bridges, the most gracefully curved, before arriving at Kingaminé.

Kingaminé is a culminating point, from which may be seen on the right, as far as the eye can reach, a lovely valley, into which limpid and purling waters find their way from the cascades of Hanniadaki and Hotono-taki.

The route, hitherto simply hilly, begins to rise

* Hotel.

as steep as a flight of steps, then all at once descends, but soon after becomes level as far as the village of Tchouzenji, built on the borders of the lake of this name; and this village was to be the furthest point of our excursion. Before arriving there, on turning off a little from the right, may be seen another waterfall, one grander than the others. It is the cascade of Kegonno-taki, the height of which we estimated at 130 yards at least, whilst the Japanese say it is two *tcho*—about 110 yards more. The *coup-d'œil* is magnificent; it is impossible to imagine anything more lovely, more graceful, and more picturesque. It seems as if some mysterious intelligence had presided at the production and disposal of these marvels of nature, and that a cunning hand had made it a labour of love in embellishing them with all the refinements of his art. But after all, this is the fault of Japanese landscapes, that they seem too pretty to be natural, and however sober-minded one may be, he may easily fancy himself in presence of the scenery of the Opéra Comique.

Shortly after we arrived at the lake. Numerous tea-houses rise on its banks. It is a pleasure resort for the Japanese, a kind of Monte Carlo, where they come during summer to repose from the noise of the city, and to enjoy in peace those rural delights as they inhale with deep draughts the balmy breeze from the mountains.

While our guide had gone to order dinner for us in a pretty *tcha-ya*, we passed our time in loung-

ing through the village, in visiting the temple of F'taracha, and in making some purchases.

To carry away a souvenir of all the places I visit is with me almost a duty. Here it is little trays in *tsouta*, that serve to present the cups of tea ; in other places it will be a box costing two *tempo*, a paper fan, a little house in terra-cotta, a sabre, a child's toy, some insignificant picture, or other trifle. What I want is to have hereafter some palpable proof of my travels, for I desire by no means, on quitting this delightful country, to separate myself completely from it. Who would fancy the world of thoughts that will spring up, through association, in my mind, on regarding these scores of nicknacks that would appear so insignificant to other people ?

The *tsouta* is a large tropical creeper, a kind of giant ivy, the trunk of which attains four or five inches in diameter, and this sawn into thin slices, they form saucers with these discs, that are quite original.

The lake, surrounded with mountains, is wanting naturally in horizon. To see one's way over this country it is necessary to scale the mountains, that overhang to their summits ; but since the ascent would entail a fatigue for which probably there would be little to compensate, we prefer being enlightened by a native. The good man replies to our questions most readily, and points out to us Nikko on the east, Fousi-yama on the south-west, and Yedo on the south. Whether this informa-

tion is correct or not we cannot say, but for want of better we are obliged to accept it.

We take our breakfast, enjoying it at our ease on an elevation overlooking the lake, and having had half-an-hour's trip on the green water in a boat, we resume our way to Nikko, where we arrive at eight in the evening, tired enough, but quite enchanted with our journey.

Here we were moved by an affecting episode, which shows us again that simple candour of the Japanese character, and which gives an example of the confiding tenderness of the girls, a characteristic, however, I have often heard unjustly disputed.

About eight the next morning, so soon as we were dressed to begin the trip across the splendid scenery of the Nikko, we found that a young girl had arrived from a journey early at the hotel, and desired to speak to us. Our curiosity being very much piqued, we hurried, and Marcel, being ready first, presented himself.

"You are French?" said the interesting stranger to him.

"Yes, *mous' mé-san.*"

"Then you know David-san?"

"I think not. Where does he live?"

"In France—in Paris."

"That is rather vague. Where have you known him, my charming child—this happy David?"

"At Yokohama, some time ago. I loved him,

and he loved me also. On going away last year, he promised to write to me, and he made me promise to reply to him to Paris. I have not yet received any letter, but then France is so far away! So soon as I knew there were some Frenchmen here, I was quite overjoyed. 'They will be sure to know David-san,' I said to myself, 'and be able to tell me something about him.' Oh, you must know him, I am sure. He is a Frenchman, and there is no one like him."

Is it possible to find anywhere so thoroughly confiding a heart, such innocent fidelity? The shadow of a doubt never entered an instant into this frank, loving soul. David, the only one in the world, the chosen of her heart, is a Frenchman, and one that should be known at the first glance among a thousand. "I loved him," said the maid, and this was evident. But did he return her love? Of this she was as sure as she was that the sun's beams would give forth their warmth to-morrow. "He loved me too," she added; "I have not yet heard from him, but I shall hear, because he has promised to write. France is so very far. It would take more than a year, perhaps, to come from France to Japan." And the tender-hearted creature drew from her bosom a letter.

"Take this," she says to our friend, "it is for him. You will give it to him when you return to your country."

Marcel is stirred by this affecting incident, even to tears. Perhaps he finds a certain analogy be-

tween the state of his own heart and that of his charming interlocutor. Would it not be cruel, he reflected, to undeceive this poor girl? Why should he so brutally demolish in her mind an innocent illusion? Therefore, he ponders over the consequences, and pity soon gets the better of truthfulness.

"David-san," he says, feigning to recall a long remembrance; "to be sure I know him; I saw him quite recently in France. He spoke to me of his dear——"

"O-Hana, monsieur."

"Precisely. Of his dear O-Hana-san. Decidedly it is a very happy name."

Just at this moment we enter, and, perceiving at once the true situation, we all vow that we are acquainted with the happy fellow who had been able to steal so loving a heart.

This lie was too white to trouble our conscience; it was at least an excusable subterfuge. Go thy way, innocent little loving creature, and dwell evermore in the sunbeams of thy sweet illusion! May our deception lull thee a long time to come in thy enchanted dream!

While thy lover, doubtlessly, has forgotten thee; while he is wasting his best days, perhaps, in the ensnaring, delusive pleasures of Parisian life, thou, keep thine innocent heart pure and holy and buoyed up by hope!

Will he ever return? It is possible; the least expected things happen constantly in this world.

Marcel will religiously keep thy letter. The caprice of some accident may one day find these two men in one another's presence. Who knows? The cruelty of blighting so much love would have been heartless. At all events, Japan is quite an attraction for the French. Can he ever forget its bright sky, its charming landscapes, its wonderful sport, its beautiful and smiling daughters, and courteous hosts? Certainly not. Hope, then!

Live and hope, though the heart-strings quiver,
Kind Providence, in a voice sublime, bids us live and hope.

After endless mutual compliments and wishes of "bon voyage" we separated.

The moment is almost solemn, for we are now going to set out to begin one of the most curious and instructive studies that is possible to be made on the people of Japan, in examining the temples of Nikko.

The architecture of a people reveals its genius and throws light on its history; it reproduces sometimes even its physical characteristics. Thus, in the Chinese roofs, the line slightly curved and turned up at the two ends, suggests the line of the eyes of the yellow race, passing obliquely from each side of the nose to the tips of the ears. With the Japanese, in whom the eye tends to approach the horizontal line of the white races, the outline of the roofs, still slightly arched, conforms itself nevertheless much nearer to the straight line than it does with their neighbours; but if it is not, as in

China, a distinguishing trait of the architecture, the roof notwithstanding is the capital piece of their monuments. Here it is decidedly a form derived from the tent of the nomads, shepherds, or warriors, on a larger scale.

In Japanese architecture the eye therefore sees no elements of the classic beauty of the Greek or the Gothic, but, for all that, a certain grandeur may clearly be perceived that strikes us with astonishment and commands our admiration.

In Japan, materials of construction abound everywhere; it must therefore be attributed to the climate, or rather to the nature of the country itself, if we do not discover in this land anything supremely artistic but in constructions of wood. On a soil undermined with volcanoes, where earthquakes are as common as blasts of the mistral in the plains of Provence, buildings of stone are evidently far too insecure to be adopted.

In France, wood constructions are simply makeshifts, and we recognise in them something characteristic of scaffolding, the buildings of the work-shop, the booths of the fair, or the camp hut. With our idea of the requisites of architectural art in France, it is difficult to conceive a durable monument like a temple or a palace constructed of wood. We should fancy we heard always behind the planks the singing of the masons, the drollery of the clown, or the clack and clang of arms.

But in order to be convinced that the majesty

of architecture does not absolutely emanate from the material, but indeed much from the form, one must go to Japan, and his opinion will undergo a change.

In architecture there are three forms of grandeur—the breadth, the depth, and the height; and the sublime in the art proceeds from three essential conditions: the grandeur of the dimensions, the simplicity of the surfaces, and the continuity of the lines.

In Japanese architecture not one of these qualities is well characterised. There cannot be found in these agglomerations of buildings constituting a temple, either the vague depths of the mystic pantheism of the Indian, or the breadth and solidity of the Egyptian, or the ideal aspirations of Catholicism, typified in its Gothic cathedrals shooting up in slender spires. But through the minutiae of details, the sober richness of the ornamentation, the chaste simplicity and the lightness of the style, through the *ensemble* may be seen at a glance the character of these men, a strange mixture of levity and headiness, of barbarism and civilisation, of religious indifference and fanaticism. One recognises that love of glitter, the partiality for luxury with an absence of comfort, that heroism exaggerated beyond the bounds of the probable, that religious respect for the point of honour, which seems in fact to be the only religion of this race of heroes and demi-gods.

Before arriving at the temple of Iyeyas, which

was to occupy a large portion of our day's pleasure, we stopped at Kon-gosa. This temple is filled with Buddhist and Shintôist divinities, who live together side by side in perfect harmony, and as it presents no other singular feature we soon hurried away.

On coming out we crossed the river Daiya-gawa, on a bridge painted red of an extraordinary aspect, to which a legend assigns a curious origin. At an epoch, no doubt very remote, a holy personage named Chôdo-chônin, travelling through the country, arrives one fine morning on the banks of the Daiya-gawa, whose troubled waters rushed on with an imposing uproar. The wayfarer was brave and bold ; to cross the raging torrent over a simple footway seemed too perilous ; he prefers therefore prostrating himself with his face in the dust, and to invoke Buddha.

Moved by the supplication of his servant, the god hurries up. Standing upright on the other bank, he holds in his hand two serpents, the one red and the other green. Chôdo-chônin, at the sight of the divinity, again prostrates himself, and Buddha suddenly hurls the serpents into the deep, which are immediately transformed into a red bridge covered with verdant grass.

At a short distance from the river we enter into the dependency of Tochognoum, or temple of Iyeyas. This temple resembles very much in its form and details the temple of the Shiba of Yedo. It is certainly the finest I have visited

in Japan and, in my opinion, is really in every respect the most admirable in the empire. Its architecture is Shintôist in the purest style, perfectly preserved; its souvenirs, of the highest historical interest; its numerous articles of *virtù*, mostly the endowments of princes; everything, in short, is here united to attract the traveller's attention.

Before entering the temple proper, we pass through the courts and buildings that lead the way and surround the main; we visit the store-rooms where they keep the sacerdotal ornaments, the sacred books, the *koci* of the ceremony in which are carried on days of fête the images of the gods and the statue of Iyeyas. We then enter into a large room, where the *bonzes* executed formerly a religious dance, known by the name of *gakondo*, which they have now turned into a work-room.

On going out, our guide calls our attention to a beautiful stone fountain, the gift of Nabésima, Prince of Hozen; the grand simplicity of this fountain is striking, and the effect altogether is very graceful; it is composed of a basin covered with a square roof, supported on four pillars. Afterwards we pass in review a multitude of objects that have been collected from all quarters, due principally to the liberality of a friendly sovereign, or a people in vassalage. Here it is a bronze bell or a chandelier of the same metal, encased in a kind of cage—presents from the

Coreans ; there, another chandelier, offered to the gods by the Prince Satsuma in the name of the Lin-kin islands ; further on, an elegant kiosque with a third chandelier reposing beneath, presented by the Dutch ; and finally, a quantity of articles of *virtù*, though not interesting enough to describe.

We take a passing glance at the stable of the war-horse that bore the grand Tycoon many times to victory, and we enter under the great covered door in sculptured wood leading to the sanctuary.

Here the description becomes rather difficult, if one would enter into details necessary to have an exact idea of the monument.

The roof, which is remarkably elegant, rises on strong wood-work reposing on a stone pavement. The temple consists of two large buildings connected by a low hall, the floor of which, they say, is formed of a single stone, measuring 33 feet by 48, and is for this reason called the stone hall. The *bonzes* arrive in this hall by a covered gallery which traverses the surrounding wall ; thence they pass, according to circumstances, either into the hall on the right, always closed to the prying eyes of the profane by a partition, formed of panels of a single piece of wood brought from China ; or they enter by the hall on the left, which is the larger, and, I believe, the principal. It is by this side that we begin our visit.

At the summit of the stairs, we continue our way through a vast gallery within a balustrade and covered with a projecting roof. The uprights, in which are fixed the panels in wood from China, sculptured and embellished with delicate paintings, constitute objects of art of great value.

The ceiling of the principal hall is formed in compartments of sculptured wood, marvellously worked ; everything in this apartment is in a state of preservation very rare among the Orientals ; the richness of the furniture is extraordinary. At each extremity there is a little apartment, the one reserved for the Mikado or his ambassadors, and the other for the Tycoon. The chamber of the Emperor is simple in comparison with the other set apart for the Tycoon, the reason for which is not clear ; the latter is brilliant with gold lacquer, paintings, and sculptured wood ; the ceiling is composed of two compartments only of about 16½ square feet in precious wood artistically sunk ; the panels of the partition are also of sculptured wood and of colossal proportions ; the *tatami* are wonderfully fine, and the divers utensils, distributed here and there, are of gold lacquer in exquisite taste and of considerable value. Everything, in short, reminds one of its proud proprietor, and on entering into this abode one is able to form some idea of that refined magnificence with which the usurpers of the temporal power knew so well to surround themselves—a splendour which must have been the least powerful source of their

prestige and complete authority, that endured till the revolution of 1868.

We were sorry we could not penetrate into the closed building, and we tried to bribe the *bonze* who accompanied us, but, whether from the obstacle of stringent regulations, or personal scruples arising from the sense of duty and the disinterestedness of the holy man, which was not unlikely, he replied to our entreaties with a formal and dignified refusal, and we were consequently obliged to consider ourselves beaten.

Before leaving, we stop to look at an exhibition, installed in the galleries surrounding the temple and in its dependent buildings. This exhibition was inaugurated at Nikko some years since, but is not opened regularly; it begins generally at the commencement of the fine season and lasts a hundred days.

Among a considerable number of objects arranged with little order, a few attract our attention particularly. There is a great variety, such as embroidered clothing, bronze flowers, metallic mirrors, wooden masks, sabres, priests' hats, falcons in wood, lanterns of pearl, lances, matchlocks, silken tiger-skins with wooden heads, many specimens of armour, admirable boxes in gold lacquer; and, among all these things, we remark more particularly at first two sabres that belonged formerly to Iyeyas. One of them having been lost one day by the grand Tycoon on the sea-shore, it was brought to him a long time after-

wards in a state that may be easily conceived, and certainly we should never have supposed that the two bits of steel, corroded with rust and covered with crystallisations, represented the once-famous sword of the terrible warrior, if our guide had not vouched for the fact. This relic is void of beauty, of course, but as a relic it claimed our respect.

Our attention is afterwards attracted by a numerous collection of pavilions embellished with various ornaments, of some of which our engineer takes drawings.

We admire a series of divers utensils and vestments that belonged to the Princess, the wife of Kidetada, the successor of Iyeyas; they consist of silver scissors, a spinning-wheel, *culottes* of embroidered silk, slippers (*coutsou*), and a quantity of trifling objects for women's use.

On passing we strike the bells of a little chime, the sounds of which, to our great astonishment, are at the intervals of the European scale. We arrive at last at the *norimono* of the Iyeyas. This chair, pierced by a ball from top to bottom, recalls an episode in the life of the man whose genius enabled him to give a fresh splendour to that martial royalty of the Tykoons, a royalty more powerful than the legitimate one.

One day as he was walking in the environs of Osaka, his enemy, Sanada, posted on the heights commanding the route with a band of partisans, attacked the noble warrior with a shower of pro-

jectiles ; one only struck the lacquered box and passed right through without touching the great man.

This adventure was very near costing Iyeyas his life, but, having come off safe and sound, it augmented still more his prestige among the people, who saw in this miraculous escape a special protection of Providence.

This is, from an historical point of view, the most remarkable treasure of the exhibition, therefore it was the flower of the bunch reserved for us by our guide before conducting us to the tomb of the chief of the last dynasty of the Tykoons, and this pious pilgrimage, considering the late hour, was to close the day's excursion.

Iyeyas after death, contrary to the custom of the epoch, was not delivered over to the flames of the funeral pile. His body, after having been subjected to certain preparations, with the object of preserving it from decomposition, was laid in a coffin of precious wood and deposited in a monumental tomb, built expressly by order of the Mikado.

The monument, situated in the north of the temple, is raised on a mound, at the summit of which the visitor arrives by a staircase exceedingly picturesque. The mausoleum has served as a model for the tombs of the Shiba, and they are all alike. It is composed of a pedestal of massive granite, on which repose divers objects in bronze ; a vertical cylinder about a foot in diameter,

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furnished with a door ; then a dog and a crane perched on a tortoise, and a bouquet of flowers.

The body having been interred, the cylinder was not destined at Nikko to any important use ; but at the Shiba, where most of the Tykoons' bodies have been burnt, it certainly should enclose the funereal urn, in which sleep till the resurrection promised by the gods the ashes of illustrious personages.

As to the other ornaments, they typify, no doubt, a mystic idea, one on which I have tried in vain to be enlightened.

The sight of all these celebrated antiquities has plunged us into a sort of epic reverie that imposed itself on the imagination in spite of sober reflection ; and an unaccustomed silence in our party, generally so loquacious, has dismissed a gaiety, a little frivolous and too often accompanied with a humour to disparage, so characteristic of the Frenchman abroad.

It seemed as if the spirit of these heroes, whose remains sleep under this sacred dust, had some occult influence over us. Carried back to three centuries ago, we feel as if we were moving in the living throng of that extraordinary society, whose intrepid representatives, indefatigable champions of the point of honour, will live evermore in history to recall this precept of Confucius : "Thou shalt not live under the same sky as the murderer of thy father." A precept that was never more appropriate to any country than the land of the daimios,

one that is the base of Japanese chivalry, the pivot on which turns this singular civilisation—a mixture of a refined barbarism and an exquisite tenderness.

When we were recalled to practical life by our guide, who was more insensible to our impressions than those of his stomach, the day was fast closing, and when we at last entered our hotel it was in the dead of night.

CHAPTER XII.

EXCURSION TO NIKKO CONTINUED.

Turned out of Bed by an Earthquake—Conflagrations and how they are Met—Visits to Various Temples—Mortuary Monuments—Mysterious Chessboards—The Tomb of a Celebrated Horse.

THE supper having been disposed of, every one, little inclined to conversation, went away to glide into his *f'ton*. We had been sleeping hardly two hours, snoring like people who have a tranquil conscience and wearied limbs, when we were roused suddenly by a terrible shock. I roll over my neighbour, who, too well-bred probably to make any disagreeable remark, confines himself to calling me a queer fellow ; but just at this moment another shock, in a contrary direction, wakes him up completely and pitches him on me. It was now quite evident that it was an earthquake. In the twinkling of an eye, everybody is on his legs, and with his trousers in his hands rushes towards the creaking doors. Our hosts, more accustomed than we were to these events, were already in the

garden ; the girls, no more than half-awake, were readjusting the disorder of their nocturnal toilette ; and the men, less concerned about their personal appearance, were coolly cramming their little pipes that they might be congenially occupied whilst waiting for the phenomenon to cease.

When we rejoin the rest of the party all danger has disappeared. It was the first time I had experienced an earthquake in the night, though in Japan it is by no means an uncommon occurrence, for hardly a week passes without a trembling of the ground, more or less violent, taking place. I have noticed that every time these disturbances take place, people in general regard them much in the same way. At the first shock, they hesitate, if it is in the day-time, they look puzzled and question and look at each other ; if it is at night, they listen, and if a second convulsion takes place, they rush out-of-doors. When they arrive at what they consider a safe place it is all over. Everything is calm, and it was not worth the trouble to flee from the house. I believe, besides, that if the house should come down with a crash, one has no time to escape, and it would be better to remain where you are. This is what people say, but they never do it.

Houses in Japan are constructed with precautions against anticipated earthquakes. As light as wicker baskets, they quiver and oscillate, but rarely collapse. The real danger is from fire ; a lamp overturned, a *tchibatchi* pitched on its side, would set the house on fire in an instant ; the house

flames up like a match, and lights up the adjoining dwelling as if by a train of gunpowder. A whole village is consumed in a few minutes by these conflagrations, the sight of which, fearful as it is, is superb.

Last month while we were at dinner, a boatman came to warn us that an alarming light had spread all over Hommura. Hommura is a part of Yokohama where the houses are close to a spot that interested us; we therefore gave our orders promptly to launch a boat, with a party of men and their pumps, for the spot.

We arrived and found Hommura in flames. It was a terrible conflagration, a raging furnace. We offered to give a hand.

"What are you going to do?" they asked us. "Put out the fire? It is a good joke. Its work is already done, and it is useless meddling with it now." And every man with his arms crossed, stood calmly watching the advancing flames.

Here there was no terrifying clamour, no piercing cries; there were no families in dismay running about half naked under the hose of an impotent fire-engine.

But every one went about calmly removing his furniture, and the work was soon finished. There were no unwieldy articles difficult to carry, no useless luxury; the *tatami*, the *kimono*,* a few musical instruments, a collection of cooking and household utensils constituted the bulk, and these were

* Clothing.

speedily out of harm's way. These people of the golden age do not worry themselves for such a trifle, for, to-day without home, they know that to-morrow their house will be rebuilt. A neighbour or a friend will give them shelter under his own roof for a few hours, where they will find the fire of his *tchibatchi* and the water of his kettle at their disposal. This is the extent of the disaster, and some day they will do a similar good turn for their benefactor of the hour.

Hommura was consumed over an extent of more than 300 yards long by 150 yards wide. The following day it was a heap of ashes, and, unquestionably, a thorough cleaning. At daybreak every one recognised the plot occupied by his domicile, and workmen were already assembled to begin their labours. Three times twenty-four hours is time sufficient to restore everything as it stood before the conflagration. But, instead of being a calamity, it seems almost a diversion, something to break the monotony of every-day life. The poor devils who have not the good-luck to possess anything—and they are numerous enough—should welcome from time to time a little accident of this kind, for it is an excellent opportunity, if they appreciate it, to expel from their huts certain importunate guests. As to the traders, whose fortune is wholly contained in their show-cases of articles of *virtù*, they have unusual dread of fire, and accordingly have shops that defy the ravages either of flames or earthquakes. They are buildings constructed entirely of stone, without a bit of wood,

very low and solidly established on a broad base. Every commercial house, the least important, has its fire-proof storehouse, and the petty dealers club together to hire one, where, at the close of day, they deposit all their precious objects in security.

The earthquake that surprised us at Nikko had no disastrous consequences. At the end of a *mauvais quart d'heure* we resumed each of us our pillow and wandered in dreamland.

At eight o'clock the next morning, after this broken night, which in spite of everything was animating, we were quite ready to start. It was the last day we were to remain in these parts, illustrious from so many glorious remembrances, and we had still half-a-dozen temples to visit.

The temple of Iokodo is the first on our route. This temple, which is also called Yoritomo-do, or F'tats-do, serves as a funeral vault for the Tycoon Yoritomo, whose ashes are deposited in an urn placed on one of the altars of the sanctuary. The urn is covered with a veil; but the *bonse* in guard of this relic, for the consideration of a small gratuity, will draw aside the curtain, and the prying eye of the profane visitor may, at any moment, trouble in its eternal repose the remains of the first successor of Iyeyas.

This profanation of relics, that seems at first almost a sacrilege, does not appear, however, so outrageous when we bear in mind the practices in vogue among people of other religions.

The temple of Yoritomo is entirely Buddhist. The only vestiges of Shintôism that one sees

there are a few metal mirrors suspended here and there.

Among the fantastic gods arranged along the walls, looking so fierce and stern, two struck me more particularly. One was a sort of St. Michael, spearing a demon, the other a divinity called "the god of the thousand arms;" but this god is obliged to be satisfied with thirty only, and these arms seem enough for what he has to do with them apparently.

All these grotesque-looking figures were not sufficiently attractive to detain us very long. On going out, we directly entered a second Buddhist temple, where the *koci* stop on days of procession; then a third, the temple of Hokké-do. These two monuments interesting us but slightly we proceeded straight to the temple of Iyemits'. It was necessary to pass at first through a door flanked with its four guardians in painted wood—a direct importation from China. We visited the rooms set apart for the priests' costumes and ornaments, and then crossed a large court, noticing by the way a fountain similar to the one in the temple of Iyeyas, due also to the liberality of the Prince of Hizen, and some very pretty bronze lanterns, the style of which was very fanciful and pleasing.

On leaving the court we arrived at a second door, guarded, like the first, by four good men of wood of hideous aspect; two represented the gods of the wind and the two others the gods of thunder. They all had stags' horns. The first couple, painted green, have on each hand a thumb and three fingers, and on each foot two toes only.

The gods of thunder were stained red. Their hands had a thumb and two fingers, and their feet a great toe and a small one. In order to reach this door, called *Iyachamon*, we were obliged to mount a staircase, from the top of which there is a remarkable prospect.

Before passing into the temple of *Iyemits'*, we stopped here to take breath and contemplate the panorama that extends beyond the tomb of *Iyeyas* as far as the hazy distance that melts at last in the blue horizon.

The temple raised in honour of *Iyemits'*, third *Tycoon* of the dynasty, though smaller than that of *Iyeyas*, resembles it in many respects. Excessively rich as it is in ornamentation, gilding, lacquer, and paintings, it contains fewer curious antique treasures than the temple of the grand *Tycoon*.

The first hall and the gallery are open to the public, but the hall which contains, it is said, the portrait of *Iyemits'*, is closed. Here, as in the temple of *Iyeyas*, an impassible barrier stops the way. A *bonze*, accustomed, no doubt, to see Europeans attempting to go beyond, was preparing himself to give a decisive answer to our anticipated attempts at bribery; but the good man had his sense of duty roused to no purpose, for, being sensible of our recent experience, we had no wish to trouble this one to give us a lesson as to how we should conduct ourselves.

Our guide hurried us along. On coming out of the temple we passed in succession before the tomb

of Iyemits', which is far inferior to that of Iyeyas, and before a certain number of mortuary monuments containing the remains of priests of the imperial family who have served in succession at Nikko during two centuries.

After these tombs we visited successively the pretty temple of F'taracha, a votary to the worship of Shintô; then an immense Buddhist temple, remarkable only for its vast dimensions; a stone, whose virtue cures all maladies; another stone, rather coarse in conception, representing young infants, where sterile women bring their offerings in order to become mothers; and finally, a temple destined to receive thanksgivings, the gifts and the *ex-voto* of these women when their prayers have been granted. These gifts, with the object of obtaining from Heaven a happy delivery, are extremely odd; they consist of little bits of wood representing the pieces of the Japanese chess-board.

But it was not easy to explain the connection existing between the happy delivery and the game of chess. It is a sphinx, a kind of charade wherein one does not divine the word, and whose solution, I suspect, is rather indelicate.

Let him try to discover the occult meaning who may: as for me I should be rather inclined to make a blot, like Courier on the pastoral of Longus; and I will merely observe that the temple is literally strewn with chips, and this may give a good idea of the fruitfulness of the natives, of the benevolence of the Oriental Lucina, and explain at the same time the inutility of midwives in the

country of the daimios, thanks to the divine intervention of the chess-playing god.

At two steps further, another stone rose amidst a thicket. "Come," said our guide, leading us forward, "this is the last curiosity you will have to see at Nikko." What was it after all so remarkable? It was here that reposed the remains of the war-horse of the great Iyeyas, and, indeed, the noble charger was fully entitled to share a small portion of his master's glory.

The *djin-riki-cha* ordered for the return journey were waiting for us at the door of the hotel, and, bidding adieu to Monsieur Soudzouki, our host, with whose charges we were not dissatisfied, we quitted Nikko.

CHAPTER XIII.

RETURN TO YOKOHAMA.

The Return—The *Etta*—Guenzaburo—The *Otokodatté*—A Day's Jolting and a Night in a Japanese Barge—An Irritating Visitor—Return to Yedo and Yokohama.

A STEADY "trot" of three hours and a half brought us to Osaka. There was nothing very curious to see here, and we were not disposed for any more visits, for it was already eight o'clock, and we had a long day's journey to perform on the morrow in order to reach Koga, with the hope of finding there some rapid means of arriving at Yokohama. Our leave of absence would expire the following evening, and this, of course, could not be disregarded.

Just as we were about to begin our dinner, a beggar presented himself, and, instead of receiving him with a feeling of pity, as is usually the case in Japan; instead of offering him a seat and bringing him some tea, some rice, and everything that constitutes a Japanese repast, the *mous'-mé* fled from the poor wretch; the house dog growled

surlily, menacingly showing his teeth, and the poor fellow, disconcerted at this reception, stood still in the middle of the road meekly imploring pity. A *kozukai*,* with a wave of the hand, ordered him to go away, then laid down on the road a box full of rice; the mendicant then approached, took up the rice, and disappeared.

"But why all these precautions? Why these signs of fear and particularly disgust?" "*Etta*," they replied to us. But what is an *etta*? Our Yedo friend, familiar with Japanese manners and customs, soon gratified our curiosity.

"The *ettas*," he told us, "no longer exist in Japan but in a very small number. I have often heard of them, but it is the first time I have ever been face to face with one of these reputed reprobates.

"The *ettas* are in fact pariahs, a despised race condemned to degrading work, such as an honest man would never think of doing. They wait on criminals in their prison, kill beasts, tan their skins—these are the revolting tasks they are obliged to resort to in order to get their living.

"Their origin is an open question. According to the patriots, who are enemies of all who are not of pure Japanese blood, the *ettas* are the descendants of the Mongolian invaders, abandoned by Kubla-Khan. Others, more consistent in my opinion, think that these unfortunate people are

* Servant.

the offspring of ancient executioners, whose hereditary office was execrated at the time of the introduction of the Buddhist religion, the dogmas of which severely denounce capital punishment.

“As a matter of fact, however, whatever may be the origin of these poor people, they are, as you have just seen, objects of fear and horror, which nothing seems to justify in the Japanese, so conspicuous for their kind manners and hospitality.

“A certain number of stories are related of the *ettas* that corroborate what I have just told you. A noble, named Guenzaburo, of the caste of the Hatamoto, was smitten one day with the charms of the daughter of an *etta*, who, it seems, was exceedingly beautiful. The soldier strove with all his might to subdue his love, and demanded permission from his master to absent himself for several months, that he might endeavour to forget her; but his heart gaining the ascendancy over the prejudice, Guenzaburo returned clandestinely one fine night and carried off his mistress.

“From time immemorial public order in Japan has been watched over with much care, first, by the policemen properly so called, then by the *Otokodatté*, which I shall speak of presently. The Government then was soon apprised of this monstrous abduction. The poor lover, seized, imprisoned, degraded, and divested of his goods, was forced to hide his shame in exile, and, in

accordance with laws very rigorous at this epoch, his family were included in this terrible condemnation.

"This incident will prove to you once more how punctilious the Japanese were on the point of honour, and how scrupulously they kept intact and unspotted the brilliant prestige of their nobility.

"The *Otokodaté*, which I have just mentioned, is one of the most curious things in the ancient organisation of this extraordinary country. This name applied to an association of men whose special mission was to defend voluntarily the weak against the attacks of the strong and the oppressor. The members of the *Otokodaté* bound themselves by solemn oath not to fail in their undertaking: 'Better die,' they said, 'than ever abandon the holy cause of the oppressed.'

"The chief of the association took the name of 'Father of the *Otokodaté*,' and the members were his apprentices. This society, wholly democratic, were accustomed, however, to have a *ronin* for a chief. In troublous times the *Otokodaté* aided the urban police, and had no fear of encountering the *samourai*, who were not very solicitous about the public tranquillity. These men, therefore, were adored by the people, who regarded them as their surest and most devoted protectors. As to the Father, it would be difficult to give an idea of the high veneration in which he was held.

"This association is dissolved. It was annihilated by the destroying hand of the revolution, and, like many other institutions that were an honour to the empire, it has entirely disappeared.

"Can new institutions be said to replace advantageously the ancient ones? It is a momentous question—one far too complex for an unqualified answer. We must wait and watch the course of events, in the material as well as in the moral world, in France as well as in Japan; it is a constant, grand transformation—it is progress, and we must await its results."

The following day was an unbroken succession of jolts and shocks. We stopped no longer than was necessary to change runners and take a hurried meal; but we were compensated for this rapidity in having been set down at Koga before seven o'clock. We made inquiries, and found that the surest and most economical way to reach Yedo early was to take the river. We therefore dined at our ease, and during this time our hosts set to work to secure a boat.

We had hardly finished dining when the *sendo*,* already informed, came from all parts. It was a good sign, for concurrence would bring down the terms; the offers in fact surpassed the demand by a long way, and as a rule the price fell. In the embarrassment of choosing, one of our party ran down to the river and ended the difficulty on the spot.

* Boatmen.

At eleven at night we embarked on a *foune** of extraordinary length, on the deck of which a comfortable cabin was raised. Every one found his place on the *tatami*, and rolled himself up in his blanket, and, hushed by the monotonous singing of the boatmen who rowed in cadence, our little party slept soundly till morning.

But we do not awake so agreeably, for it is raining, and the barge rolls under the vigorous swing imparted by the oars. Some one complains of unusual irritation, though localised to a mere point. Is it possible that we have visitors so ill-bred as to obtrude themselves into our private affairs, and boldly push themselves uninvited, even under the folds of our shirts? It is quite possible, considering the ubiquity and pertinacity of these intruders; but as they approach so insidiously, the titillation often starts from the imagination to the skin, and from the skin back again to the imagination; and this was probably the case in this instance, for after all the preliminary wriggling and shuffling about, the mountain was only bringing forth a mouse: a poor, lean, famished creature, too minute only to rouse our pity, was all that could be discovered at the end of the disorder into which we had been so unceremoniously thrown.

The rain continued falling and the barge kept on its course, dancing over the waves till two o'clock, when we were landed at Yedo. We had

* Boat.

time only for a very hasty brush up and a hearty hand-shaking with our friend, who had procured for us the pleasure of this delightful excursion, and, having caught the train in a gallop, we arrived in good time at Yokohama.

CHAPTER XIV.

A DAY WITH MITANI.

The Young Bride—Sundry Customs—Ceremony of the Girdle—The Epochs of a Child's Life—Danna-san's Opinion—Collection of Sabres—Value of Rare Sabres—The Japanese Armourers—The *Hatamoto*—O-Hana proposes an Excursion.

THE first thing we did the next morning was to visit Mitani's shop. O-Hana, pouting and looking peevish, fled on seeing us enter. Marcel was just going to run after her into the back room, when I seized him by the arm and made him, in spite of his impatience, rest quietly at my side and assume an air of cool indifference.

O-Hana seeing herself not followed, contrary to what she had fully expected, soon reappeared. I pitied her for her crestfallen countenance; there was consternation almost in her glance. It was so irresistibly touching that I pushed my friend towards her, and refrained from further meddling in other people's business.

Peace was soon proclaimed it seems, for a

merry ringing burst of laughter from the young girl could leave little doubt on this point. Just at this moment a young couple, whom I did not directly recognise, made their appearance at the door.

"Mon Dieu!" I cried, so soon as I recognised O-Tchika-san, the recent bride, "and you are really come, are you? You are quite changed," and, as I thought to myself, much for the worse.

"You don't see," said O-Hana, laughing, "that she has shaved off her eyebrows and lacquered her teeth."

"Oh! Unfortunate little creature. What is the meaning of all this sacrilegious mutilation?"

"Mutilation, indeed! It is the fashion. Every wife who has any self-respect ought to do as much!"

"As for me," said O-Hana, "I shall never show my self-respect in that way."

I was aware of this barbarous custom. Excuse the expression, my friends; I knew that the Emperor and the Empress formerly set the example. It was even becoming to a young girl, on marrying, to make this sacrifice of her beauty to her husband. Sometimes, indeed, in families whose manners were rigid and precise, the operation was performed before marriage. I thought, however, that this unsightly disfigurement had been almost abandoned for some time past.

The dignified Danna-san, who until this moment had not ceased smoking pipe after pipe, found the occasion favourable to ventilate his eloquence, very

interesting, however, on certain details of conjugal and family life in Japan.

"And when is the ceremony of the girdle to be?" said he to the young wife.

"You are very impatient and very impertinent, too, Monsieur Ouyeno," O-Tchika replied in a tone a little piqued.

The Customs' officer burst out laughing. "I wage," said he, turning to me, "that the French would give anything to know all about the ceremony of the girdle."

"No doubt of that," I replied.

"Very well, then ; just listen. But I must first beg O-Tchika-san's pardon for rallying her so roughly."

The young wife accepted, in sign of reconciliation, the cup of tea presented to her by the *employé*. The latter, shaking out the ash from his pipe on the edge of the *tchibatchi*, then began in these terms :

"In Japan we are accustomed to carry out certain domestic ceremonies, which stand out like landmarks in the long course of family life. The *ceremony of the girdle*, which I have just mentioned, marks the fifth month of the interesting condition of the prospective mother. You understand now the indignation of the severe O-Tchika-san. At this epoch, the happy husband—certain of soon being a happy father—offers to his spouse a silken girdle, half red and half white ; the day the present is made should be observed as a gala day. The same day, a matron, chosen in the

family or among friends, brings to the future mother a girdle that has been given to her by her husband in the same circumstances, and this is sewn to the new girdle.

"This ceremony is an occasion for exchange of presents and for fêtes, to which the parents, friends, and neighbours are invited. The matron thus contracts a sort of alliance with the infant that will come forth in due time, and takes the title of girdle godmother.

"When the new-comer makes its entry into the world, its first clothing is made of the white part of the new girdle, which has previously been dyed blue.

"As to the red portion, it is carefully put aside, and will serve later for a friend, who will sew it to her girdle.

"As we are now considering this matter," continued Ouyeno, "I am going to give you some information relating to the birth and bringing-up of children.

"When mothers arrive at their term, they wait for their deliverance on their knees, with their back against a support, and when the labour is over they preserve the same posture for twenty-one days.

"Since we have had doctors trained in Europe, or in our new schools, I have often heard them laugh at the prejudice that leads the Japanese to suppose this fatiguing position to be indispensable to prevent hæmorrhage. But the prejudice is insurmountable, and the women—who are opposed

to doctors—even in grave cases, still conform rigorously to the old customs of their grandmothers.

“Sixty-five days after its birth, the baby quits its swaddling-clothes, and forty-five days later, it is weaned. These two acts are also pretexts for festivities. The ceremony of weaning—*okoui-zomé*—is very generally fictitious, for it is by no means rare to see babies three years old still at the breast. The ceremony, however, without regard to actual weaning, regularly takes place. According to the sex of the infant, it is either a weaning godmother or a weaning godfather who directs the ceremonial of the fête.

“The brat, perched on the left knee of the godfather or godmother, makes an imaginary repast, in which it is supposed to eat and drink many things—rice, fish, cakes, tea, *saké*; every dainty passes before its little mouth, and is actually partaken by the godfather or godmother. The ceremony at last winds up by another exchange of presents between the godchild and its new parent.

“In this repast, as in the marriage feast, you will observe that the odd number seems highly prized; the three cups reappear, and most of the incidents are repeated three times.

“Until the term of three years, eleven months, and a fortnight, girls and boys have their heads kept shaved. A few days before they attain this age, their hair is allowed to grow; then, on the day fixed, the parents, friends and neighbours re-

assemble as before. They then select a new godfather or a new godmother, and before beginning the repast, that accompanies, precedes, or follows every Japanese ceremony, they proceed with much formality in dressing the hair of the happy baby. The godfather or the godmother, after having made three clips with the scissors on the crown, three on the right temple, and three on the left, bedecks the innocent with a wig, arranged according to the ancient Japanese fashion, with a lock behind the head, bound with a cord and brought over the shaven crown.

"These forms are not the last. When the baby, if a boy, is on the point of entering his fifth year, they give him a fourth godfather, whose duty it is to invest him with the *kakama*, a flowing pair of trousers similar to those of the *samourai*. The child receives on this occasion from his godfather three emblematic gifts: a false sabre, a wooden poignard, and a ceremonial dress. This costume is enriched with embroidery representing storks, tortoises, branches of fir, bamboo twigs, and cherry-blossom. The storks and tortoises, types of longevity, presage to the newly-invested a long life and without clouds; the branches of fir represent attachment to good principles; the bamboo twigs are the emblem of just judgment, of a noble heart and elevated sentiments, which should be the endowments of the future man; and the cherry-blossom, in virtue of its odour so fine and select, symbolises the fragrance of a good education.

"Finally, the most important and last of all these ceremonies is that in which the lad abandons his clothing, with full sleeves like girls', to put on man's attire. This takes place about his fifteenth year, a little sooner or later according to the development of his figure and strength. As in all the preceding ceremonies, a godfather is necessary, and this time the selection is by no means a matter of indifference, for he has to give one of his names to his godson, who will retain it united with his family name as long as he lives. The day appointed for this fête should be a gala day, the influence of which will be felt by the lad for his lifetime. This ceremony is called *the ceremony of the cap*, because formerly in noble families the godfather cut off the lock from the crown of his godson's head that he might conveniently wear a kind of head-dress which, no doubt, you have seen on our stage and in our engravings. It is a kind of head-gear specially adopted by courtiers, and when set on the head does not readily maintain its place there on account of its eccentric shape.

"The severed lock is wrapped up in paper. It is a souvenir of early youth, a sacred relic, which should be religiously preserved, and carried with the owner to the tomb.

"These," added the Customs' officer, "are some of our ancient customs, which I know you are so very partial to. You will do well to remember them, for they are falling little by little into desuetude, and they will, I hope at least, in a short

time more, be thrown aside as out of date and ridiculous."

"But why, my dear Ouyeno," I remarked to our interesting narrator, "why do you run down in this way the manners of your own country? Do you fancy that Europe is so free from absurd practices? Besides, in everything you have just pictured to our eyes, I find nothing whatever deserving of your contempt. On the contrary, I find these family ceremonies full of simplicity, feeling, and candour, and so deeply imbued with patriarchal life that they please me exceedingly."

My opinion did not seem to modify the views of the terrible innovator; but I could clearly read in the eyes of Father Mitani that I had his full approbation.

While Ouyeno was pouring out this diatribe on the ancient manners and customs of his country, Mitani, no doubt to avoid any acrimonious discussion with his son-in-law, had risen from his seat and was rummaging in the recesses of a cupboard, listening all the time attentively to the conversation.

"There," said he, laying down at our feet a bundle of sabres, "this is what I have been searching everywhere for you during your absence. There are some here to suit all tastes; but unfortunately, I have not found what I wished to offer you. Arms that are valuable are daily becoming more scarce in the way of dealers. The Europeans, who are very fond of curiosities, empty our shops, and for some time past the Japanese themselves have

been buyers of articles that are offered for sale in a moment of distress, whenever an opportunity presents itself. You may make your choice from the heap, and you may perhaps still find a few good blades, to which we will put a guard and a scabbard as well as we can."

The Japanese sabre is a formidable weapon, beside which the *coupe-choux* and the *latte* of the cavalry, adopted by the new army, are mere child's toys.

The Japanese formerly attached so much importance to the quality and perfection of this weapon, that their consideration for the workmanship was reflected wholly on the maker. The armourer was not classed among the despised group of artisans and tradesmen. The sword-makers especially enjoyed a marked esteem. It was not rare, indeed, to see the nobles raising this elevated art, in their judgment, to the rank of the liberal professions. When the decisive moment arrived for the forger to weld the strip of steel to the blade, the workman, the artist, arrayed in the costume of the *Kougé*,* performed this final operation in the open air in the presence of numerous select spectators, and attended with the most formal ceremony.

The price of sabres varies very much. At the present time one may procure some very good, at prices moderate in comparison with those that were paid for them formerly; but from £12 to £16 have still to be paid for an arm well made

* Nobles of the Mikado's Court.

and sufficiently ornamented. The proud representatives of the Japanese feudality did not hesitate to pay 1000 *rio** for a good sabre.

This sum appears to us fabulous, but it is not the highest price that these terrible arms may attain. The last Tycoon, the one with whom the Europeans and Americans had to deal on arriving in Japan, offered to our plenipotentiary a blade, sheathed in a simple scabbard of plain wood, estimated to be worth, it is said by a dealer of Yokohama, 1,500 *rio*.

This price seems exaggerated at first sight, but it appears reasonable enough if one examines a blade of the first order, and learns that in order to arrive at this perfection many long months of assiduous and minute toil are necessary to turn out a piece of work, that may not be perfect in the end in spite of all the precautions taken.

A well-tempered sabre should cut off three men's heads, each at a single stroke. The *samourai*, before concluding a purchase, prove the blades on dogs, and sometimes, it is said, on mendicants they meet with on the roads. But I will not give evidence to this last assertion, one entirely opposed to the precepts of the religion of Buddha, that enjoins its disciples to refrain from useless massacre, even the killing of animals.

It is quite certain, however, that the Tycoon's sabres were tried on the condemned to death, who had been previously executed by strangulation.

* A *rio* is about 4s. 2d.

Arms of this great value were considered as real heir-looms; they were kept with the greatest care, and scrupulously transmitted from generation to generation.

The sabres of Mitani's collection were worth neither 1,500, nor 1,000, nor even 100 *ryo*. The most wonderful did not reach the modest price of £2. I made up a lot composed of a certain number of blades. Mitani treated me as a friend, contenting himself with a very small profit, and I was accordingly in a position to carry away, without ruining myself, a few nice specimens of these fantastic swords, which have long played so grand a rôle in the accounts, more or less picturesque, travellers have given of Japan.

Desiring to assign a date to all these venerable bits of steel, we had taken off the hilts and the guards, in order to find the date of fabrication, borne beside the name of the armourer, when the arm is worth the trouble, on the part hidden by the ornamentation of the hilt. Our search, however, not having been thus far crowned with satisfactory success, we were about to abandon it, when an explanation from Ouyeno attracted our attention.

The *employé* was rubbing assiduously with the point of his finger the "silk"* of one of the blades covered with a slight coating of rust.

"Here is a sabre," he said, "nearly a hundred years old, that recounts its high deeds as clearly as a page of history. This blade, which will cut

* The armourer's term; it is the part of the blade that enters into the hilt—the tang, called in French also *la soie*.

through iron, has made more than one human head roll in the dust. It is a precious relic, a work of art whose discovery does honour to the shrewdness of Mitani-san."

"Ah! ah!" cried the trader, "Monsieur Ouyeno is pleased to accord to his father some knowledge in works of art. I accept this compliment all the more readily, since my son-in-law is by no means prodigal of praise in regard to me. I had, in fact, recognised the value of this blade, and I am happy," he said to me, "to offer it to you as a *sindjio** and a souvenir."

I thanked heartily the kind old man.

"Do you know," I asked him, "who has been the proprietor of this remarkable arm?"

"No," he replied, "but according to the proud device it bears, it is easy to recognise an illustrious origin. It is not fine enough for a daimio, but it has certainly belonged to a *hatamoto*."

I was going to question Ouyeno on the meaning of this name, but, as Danna-san was on the point of speaking, I had no time to do so.

"One more relic of our ancient civilisation," he said.

Then desiring, no doubt, that his father-in-law would pardon his last freak, "it is a souvenir of chivalric glories," he added.

"*Hatamoto* signifies 'under the banner.' The number of men-at-arms mustered under the banner of the *Shōgun*† was about 80,000. When

* *Sindjio* means a respectful present.

† General-in-chief.

Iyeyas, nominated to the dignity of *Shōgun*, quitted the province of Mikawa, a large body of these warriors, fascinated by the lustre of his glory, followed the hero. These feudatories received, for recompense for their services and their fidelity, grants of lands, representing an annual revenue of 10,000 *kokou* of rice, and they were ennobled under the title of *hatamoto*.

"Under the *fondai* or daimio, grand vassals of the Tycoon, the *hatamoto* soon became a powerful caste, forming, in time of war, with their own vassals, the main body of the army, and occupying, in time of peace, all the secondary offices of the Government.

"This caste, the bravest, the boldest, and the purest of our ancient society, was in constant rivalry with the grand feudal daimios of the Mikado, a rivalry that was often carried into sanguinary struggles, when the victory remained generally on the side of their valiant arms.

"Until the revolution of 1868, the *hatamoto* were the most faithful supporters of the Tycoon, to whom they invariably furnished at all times subsidies of men and money. A few more particularly attached to their suzerain have followed him into exile; but the fortune of the Prince of Tokougawa, considerably reduced since his retirement, does not permit him to maintain a very considerable army.

"The fall of the Tycoon entailed the ruin of this great family, whose members, scattered by the blast of adversity, and living apart and unknown,

are hiding the shame of their downfall far away from the new Government."

Mitani, not much accustomed to hear his son-in-law as an apologist for the ancient régime, and mistrusting, not without reason, the sincerity of his sentiments, listened with an air of indifference without joining in the conversation. The Customs' clerk, vexed at this indifference, and regretting perhaps, having troubled himself to no purpose, got up abruptly and departed without even replying to his wife, who begged him to wait.

The young couple, impatient, no doubt, at finding themselves alone, also took leave of us.

"Danna-san is in a rage," said O-Hana, "but it is nothing very serious. O-Sada-san has only to remain here, and, before a quarter of an hour has passed, he will come for his dear little wife and make peace with his father."

The young girl was quite right. Ouyeno soon reappeared; his contrite look and downcast countenance moved the old man. O-Hana, less lenient, burst out laughing in her brother-in-law's face, who did not, however, manifest his ill-humour afresh. As for Marcel and myself, we thought it prudent to leave, to relieve out of doors our pent-up hilarity.

We were just stepping into the street when O-Hana stopped Marcel by laying her hand on his arm.

"I don't want you to be going away again," she said, "without giving me notice beforehand. I have been miserable enough these last four days.

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I thought I was never going to see you again, and I imagined all sorts of things." Then fearing, perhaps, we might not be pleased if she showed herself too exacting, "you don't know, Kamakoura," she hastened to add: "during your absence I have been arranging an excursion. We will go if you like to do homage to the statue of the *Daibouts'*, which is very curious for Europeans and much venerated by the Japanese. My sister, O-Sada, Ouyeno, O-Tchika-san and her husband will be of the party."

"Your plan is fully accepted, my pet," I said to Marcel's friend. "We will go all together to pay our compliments to my lord the *Daibouts'*, as soon as the service permits a fresh leave. To-morrow, perhaps, we may be able to fix the day."

CHAPTER XV.

SOMETHING ABOUT SILK AND LACQUER, ETC.

The Trade of Japan—The Silk Trade—An Unlucky Miscalculation—The Lacquer Manufacture—The Love of Gain is destructive of Art—Antiquity of the Invention of Lacquer—Cultivation of the Lacquer Tree—How the Lacquering is done—The Rise of Agriculture.

BEFORE going again into the country, we thought it would be prudent to remain eight or ten days on board ; and to employ usefully this requisite repose, I set about obtaining some information on the commercial situation of the country—in-formation that I had neglected hitherto, though decidedly interesting. From the courteousness of a few French merchants, known to our friend, and some members of the Consulate, I was enabled to gather the following facts, and to rely on their accuracy.

The importations and exportations have been gradually diminishing, nearly in equal proportions, for some time past.* The rapid sales of the first

* From 1873 to 1874 the value of the total diminutions has been 5,336,105 piastres, equal to about £1,120,000 sterling.

importations having led to the belief that an important new market had been created, the shipments were soon multiplied to a ridiculous extent, and European manufactures, produced with increasing exuberance and beyond the needs of the rest of the world, were poured in floods for many years on the Japanese markets. The natural result of these ill-advised shipments was a complete glut, and then a marked falling-off in the importations.

As to the exportations, their diminution is due to causes rather complex and difficult to explain. It would, therefore, be easier to give the facts. If we consider the commodity of silk, which constitutes the principal commerce of Japan with European countries, we find that Japanese silks are lessening in demand for European manufacture. The reason of this is because the silks of Italy are cheaper and more carefully cleaned, and on the other hand, the silks of Oshiou, Hamatsuki, and Etchizen, formerly much prized in the European markets for their average quality, are not offered for shipment on account of the demand for home consumption.

The business of silkworms in card boxes has also suffered great depreciation, and this is in consequence of a blunder of the breeders, who, with the object of gaining more, have made a deplorable calculation, of which they have now to suffer the consequences.

It is generally about the middle of October

when the "egg-buyers"* set out from Japan for Europe, and many reasons induce them to avoid delaying their departure as much as possible at this season. As this custom is well-known to the producers, they hold back their goods in the interior of the country and arrive at the export market at the end of the season, a few days only before the departure of the steam-ships. The egg-buyers, being then in a hurry to leave, will buy, they suppose, at any price, it is said, without haggling.

The calculation savoured of a Machiavellian policy, and, unluckily for the Japanese, the artifice was found out and foiled. The egg-buyers waited patiently as usual, and one fine morning the market, hitherto quite bare, was literally encumbered with boxes.

Instead of exhibiting any concern or compromising themselves by injudicious demands, the Europeans did not stir an inch to meet the sellers. Some employed their leisure in lounging among the bazaars, picking up articles of *virtù*, others, bent on pleasure, demanded from the Government passes to travel into the interior. Business consequently came to a standstill, for offers to the few remaining were made in vain.

One day at last, the egg-buyers made up their minds. "We are quite willing to buy," they said to the Japanese dealers, "but we buy at a low figure."

* The egg-buyers (*graineurs*), are commercial travellers sent from Europe to buy boxes of silk-worm eggs.

In the presence of this "strike" of the buyers, the Japanese clique was seized with a sort of panic. During two days the most extraordinary bargains were concluded; what was sold in the preceding year for two piastres* was delivered now for forty cents† only.

The situation was desperate, and exporters were filled with consternation. It was necessary to strike a decisive blow, or the silk industry would inevitably be ruined in the empire of the Mikado. Since the price fell in consequence of the abundance on the market, they would destroy a portion of the merchandise. The native bankers met, and decided to create a special fund to indemnify the raisers, as far as possible, for the loss consequent on burning a certain quantity of the commodity.‡ This expedient raised the price for a few days only, and, shortly after, fresh arrivals from the country brought down the price lower than ever.

In short, the silk and silk-worm egg trade is in complete stagnation, and the policy to be adopted to place it on a better footing is so important that it should occupy the attention of the Government.

The trade in lacquered objects has been hitherto, after the silk trade, the most important in Japan. The number of boxes, cabinets, and lacquered

* The Mexican piastre is worth in Japan about 4s. 2d.

† The cent is the hundredth part of a piastre.

‡ Between the 9th and 24th October, 1874, 400,000 boxes were burnt; the proprietors received from 15 to 25 cents indemnity per card box.

fancy goods sent out of Japan every year to most countries in Europe and America is incalculable.

Unfortunately, the quantity excludes everywhere the possibility of quality. Commerce kills art, and after one has stood in ecstasy before the artistic marvels of old Japan and enters by chance into one of those shops in France or England whose proprietors pique themselves on offering to their customers specimens of the pure, the genuine, the fine and superfine, the visitor's feelings are harrowed at the sight of those coarse imitations that are so stupidly presented by *soi-disant connoisseurs* as the *ne plus ultra* of the beautiful.

Alas! Poor Japan! How thou art disparaged. But then it is partly thy fault. Why suffer thyself to be seduced by the love of gain? Why dost thou abandon thy artistic traditions? It is, indeed, another miscalculation.

At the present day the Japanese *bibelots*, depreciated as they are, begin to fall in France, in commercial language, to the last step of the ladder. They make a miserable figure beside the "*articles de Paris*," beside the box "*carton gaufré*," the artificial flowers, the purses in false morocco, the horn combs, and indiarubber braces.

"What is that?" demands the French Customs' officer on regarding with a perplexed eye some boxes of gold lacquer, real jewels, bought at Osaka.

"They are lacquer——"

"Good! Fine haberdashery; ten francs the hundred kilos——"

"What do you say? Haberdashery!"

"Oui, monsieur."

Haberdashery, indeed! my boxes of gold lacquer, my pretty little boxes that I paid so much for—these haberdashery! What an insult! No matter. We will profit at least by the ignorance of this man, and overlook the stupid error in consideration of the economical result.

The art of lacquer originated in Japan, according to tradition, in the middle of the eighth century, but the Japanese, who have made researches regarding this point, assign the end of the ninth century as the date of this invention. Four hundred years later, this art had acquired a certain perfection, for they have preserved the memory of a celebrated painter on lacquer, who at this epoch invented new methods and enjoyed a high reputation.

The fundamental material for the manufacture of lacquer is the sap of a tree called *ouroushi*. The *ouroushi* yields, besides the lacquer, a fruit from which is extracted the vegetable wax.

The Japanese make a distinction between the male and the female tree; the latter only produces fruit. When it is cultivated for the wax it is allowed to grow freely, and it attains a considerable size. If, on the contrary, it is required for lacquer, they prune it every year to give vigour to the trunk; then, when it is sufficiently robust, that is about the fifth year, they begin to make incisions for the extraction of the sap.

The incisions are made horizontally from the

foot upwards; the sap trickles down the trunk, and every morning it is carefully collected with a spatula and deposited in wooden vases.

After four or five years of this debilitating operation, the tree becomes exhausted; it is then cut down, and its excellent wood serves for the manufacture of a quantity of diverse objects.

The *ouroushi* is raised either from cuttings or from seed; the latter method is considered far preferable to the former, but it demands endless care and precautions. At first, it is necessary to bruise the fruit in a mortar, in order to separate the seed from the pulp. The seed, after having been washed, dried in the sun, and picked, is then mixed with wood-ashes, and the whole put into straw sacks, and then watered for some days with liquid manure.

When this operation is finished, the sacks are plunged into water, where they are allowed to remain till the end of winter.

Shortly before the beginning of spring, on a day marked in the calendar of the "Good Gardener" of Japan, the sacks are taken out of the water, and the seed, sown broad-cast, is covered with a light layer of soil.

The quantity of sap an *ouroushi* is capable of yielding naturally depends on its vigour and the nature of the soil. Its trunk attains in five years six or seven inches in diameter under favourable conditions. The bark of fine-grown trees is so thick that it is often necessary to strip it before making the ordinary incisions.

It is naturally in the spring and summer that the work is done. Sometimes it is continued till autumn ; but it is well-known that the descending sap is of bad quality. The most highly esteemed in trade is that drawn in the middle of the summer.

The price varies according to the district of the country, and according to the product of the harvest ; the average is about 100 *rio* the picule,* about 3s. 4d. per lb.

In addition to the cultivated *ouroushi* there is a tree called *yama-ouroushi*, and a kind of ivy, the *tsuta-ouroushi*, both of which yield sap, but in very small quantity and of very indifferent quality.

The *yama-ouroushi*, which increases abundantly, resembles very much the cultivated *ouroushi*, but the Japanese well know the difference, and weed out the intruder from their plantations.

The real lacquer-tree is not common except in the eastern part of Japan. The superior lacquer comes from the province of Yoshino, but the bulk, introduced into commerce, comes from the province of Etshizen. It is into this province where they go in quest of workers and painters in lacquer, these being the most esteemed in Japan.

The Japanese manufacture for their personal and daily use, a variety of articles of plain lacquer without any ornamentation ; they constitute almost all their domestic utensils from the rice-box to the

* The picule is about 132 lb. English.

toilet basin. These objects, very prettily turned out, do not require any unusual talent from the workman; but the fine lacquers, enriched with designs such as the Japanese call *maki-e*, in the preparation of which gold dust is employed, are the work of real artists.

I have often gone into the work-rooms of Tama-ya and of Soodjiro, the two great makers of Yokohama, and I have come away quite astonished at the skill and lightness of hand exercised by the workmen in these first-rate establishments.

The objects intended to be lacquered are made of plain wood, excessively thin, and joined with a perfection that is marvellous, the secret of which being known only to the Japanese, who are the best cabinet-makers in the world.

The lacquer is first applied by a brush in successive layers more or less numerous, which must be allowed to dry in a time determined by the degree of temperature.

When they arrive at the stage of ornamentation, the designs, previously executed on silk paper, are coated with lacquer varnish, and applied quickly to the object with force, which retains a humid impression of it. This is the moment in which is revealed the true artist. With a fine brush dipped in impalpable gold dust, he traces over all the lines just soaked in varnish. When this work is done it has to dry during at least twenty-four hours, and then he has to recommence and continue the same process till the desired thickness is obtained. The painter will be obliged

subsequently to trim his work, but until it is ready for this operation he hands it over provisionally to the polisher.

The polishing is done, first with the charcoal dust of the *ouroushi* wood, then with a white powder, the composition of which is unknown to me. When all the parts are well united, the painter gives his last touches to the design, lays on the final ornamentation, and then passes it to workmen, whose business is to finish it with a surface of varnish applied with a pad.

A work so very elaborate entails much trouble, and consequently requires a long time ; it is therefore easy to understand the apparently exorbitant prices of fine lacquers.

Tama-ya, who was very obliging, and I believe thoroughly conscientious, having once heard me expressing my high admiration of the beauty of his productions, said to me : " I would not run the risk of endangering the art of lacquering, and I therefore take every care to secure excellence in my manufacture. I sell at high prices, and you buy nothing of me, because you prefer the old lacquers to mine. You are right, there is nothing equal to the old lacquers, but if I wanted to manufacture as in times of old, I should be obliged to quadruple my prices, and then I should sell nothing at all. I have here a great number of competitors, whose concurrence is all the more unfair, inasmuch as, it depreciates our work in the eyes of Europeans. There is nothing to be done to put a stop to the evil, and, if the exporting

mania rages a few years longer, we shall shortly be manufacturing no more lacquered cabinets, turning out, like the Chinese, nothing but painted paste-board boxes."

While the silk trade and the lacquer manufacture are still gradually declining, the cultivation of tea is developing. The exportation of the scented leaf is increasing considerably every year, and is beginning to keep its ground advantageously with the teas of the Yang-tse-Kiang.

Agriculture in general progresses rapidly, farming is spreading, and model farms are springing up in many parts; the Government encourages them, and supports them with subventions.

At the present time, the artificial pastures, clover, lucerne, etc., which succeed wonderfully well, are capable of nourishing more than thirty thousand head of cattle, and I have no doubt that in a short time Japan will become, if not the Normandy of the extreme East—which the nature of her soil would not permit—at least, a country highly productive, where the European will find the means of furnishing his table without being obliged to resort so much to canned meat.

CHAPTER XVI.

OUR PLEASURE PARTY TO KAMAKOURA.

Kamakoura — A Fête — The Wrestlers — A Memorable Contest—A Sentimental Promenade—Pious Pilgrims—A Pleasant Dinner Party—A Vexatious Surprise.

MY duties on board and my investigations on shore left me hardly any leisure, consequently, during these few days I made but rare and short visits to the Mitani family, and as to O-Hana, I scarcely saw her. But Marcel more than compensated for my absence; he never lost an opportunity to go and take a lesson in Japanese, and every evening he said to me on his return:

“When are we going to Kamakoura? Mitani’s daughter is longing for the day to come.”

“We will all go the day after to-morrow,” I said at last. “Tell your friend in good time, and engage the *djin-riki-cha*.”

It was a beautiful morning when we started. The merry party was composed of the newly married couple, Ouyeno and his wife, O-Hana, and “the Japanese brothers.” The ladies were

charming in their new toilettes. O-Hana never looked prettier—her large, soft, deep eyes, with a slight cast of melancholy, had a dreamy expression, brimming with pathos.

Seven *djin-riki-cha*, well drawn and well pushed by picked men, carried us in less than five hours to the village of Kamakoura.

I shall not undertake the description of temples and idols that have already been depicted so often. The stone of Omanko-sama is, besides, much too picturesque for me to attempt any sketch. As to the *Daibouts'* and divers other temples of this country, readers who interest themselves in Japan know them as well as I do.

It happened to be a fête day. Excursionists were coming in crowds, less for the purpose of performing their devotions in these consecrated places than to witness the athletic sports that had been announced many weeks in advance.

The Japanese are very fond of these spectacles. The wrestlers were a class highly esteemed formerly, and more than once they have played an important rôle in the country.

In the year 705 (23 B.C.), they decided in a certain way the destiny of the empire, and it occurred in this manner. Just as they used to say in France formerly, "Le roi est mort, vive le roi!" so the succession to the throne in Japan generally took place without trouble, noise, or contest. It happened, however, that at the death of the Mikado, Souining-tenno, his two sons, being no doubt twins, entered into rivalry.

It was necessary either to divide the government between two, and thus gravely set aside tradition, or have recourse to a supreme decision—the wrestlers were charged to make known the judgment of God.

Each pretender chose a champion, and, after a struggle as memorable in the Japanese annals as the combat of the Horatii and the Curiatii at Rome, the brother, vanquished in the person of his representative, submitted to fate, and loyally abandoned to his victorious brother his share of the paternal inheritance.

At a later epoch, a certain Kiyobayashi was proclaimed arbiter general of the wrestlers of Japan and Prince of the Lions. He composed a code of fair play, and recognised forty-eight falls as valid. The games then constituted a part of the religious fêtes, which took place every autumn after the harvest, at Nara, the ancient capital. After 1606 these games began to lose some of their ancient prestige, and they gradually ceased to become the necessary accompaniment of religious ceremonies.

The Japanese continue, nevertheless, passionate admirers of the invincible champions, and wrestling, though no longer officially patronised, remains notwithstanding, as I have already mentioned, in high estimation at the present day.

Kamakoura is, among many other places, one of the points of rendezvous for the wrestlers, whose exercises never fail to draw a mass of spectators.

The Japanese wrestler is of a curious type, having nothing in common with our European wrestlers and athletes ; nothing that we have seen in our circus or on our arena can give any idea of these human mastodons, whose weight only counts in the chances of the contest. Whilst our acrobats excel in their sinuosity and their agility, which often serve them more efficiently than sheer strength, the Japanese wrestler, trained exclusively to throw his antagonist by seizing him around the waist, depends only on his weight, the sole cause of his stability.

It is quite a sight these monstrous exhibitions of flesh ; moving slowly in the struggle, with the body naked down to the waist, their legs and feet equally bare, they proceed with the most solemn slowness in their preparations for action.

Then each, with his huge haunches squatting firmly on the ground, places himself in position and waits the attack, face to face, for some moments, watching the other intently in the interval. It is impossible to foretell which will decide on beginning the assault, but suddenly one of these masses moves, draws back heavily to muster force, and then springs forward. The movement at first is slow and unwieldy, but soon accelerates under the influence of the momentum, and like a ball hurled along an inclined plane, the assailant rushes on his adversary with fearful impetuosity. If the shock is encountered, these two bodies, on meeting, produce the sound of a dull, heavy thwack, sickening to hear, and the effect altogether is terrible.

Sometimes a simple movement aside, made to escape the shock, saves the attacked from being overturned, and the assailant, being unable to arrest the impulse he has given to his body, falls heavily on his side in the cords of the barriers.

But this is only the entry into the struggle destined to stir the spectators. The two adversaries soon come to close quarters, and, grasping one another with their brawny arms, like the grip of the boa, they seem almost smothering in the formidable wring that forces the perspiration from their pores and the breath from their lungs. At last, at the end of an interval more or less prolonged, one of these colossal bodies swings to and fro in the effort to keep his balance, and then falling, like an ox under the butcher's pole-axe, brings, in his unyielding grasp, his exhausted vanquisher to the ground.

There was something repugnant in this brutal exhibition, and, therefore, I by no means found in this spectacle the interest and attraction I had anticipated from the enthusiastic description of my Japanese companions.

The crowds of people drawn together to witness this spectacle was astonishing, and every moment brought fresh arrivals in the picturesque costume of travellers—the *kimono* raised above the knees, the little sabre at the girdle, and the cane in the hand.

The temples were also thronged with visitors, and the *yadoya* were literally carried by assault.

The friends of the Mitani family offered us most hospitably the accommodation of their house, and thus spared us the trouble—which would have been by no means a light one—of finding shelter elsewhere.

In order to make our way to the arena more freely—the precincts of which were so blocked with the multitude—we had separated from the ladies, who, on their part, seemed pleased to have an opportunity of paying their devotions in the various temples of the neighbourhood.

O-Hana deemed it an urgent matter to go and prostrate herself before a certain saint, in whom, it seemed, she had special confidence.

The athletic sports afforded us little amusement; the vitiated air surrounding large assemblages is never to my taste, and I was glad to breathe a purer and more fragrant atmosphere. Marcel, being of the same opinion, proposed to leave our good friends to themselves for a while, and to go in search of some rustic spot where we might pass our time in meditative tranquillity, with the pencil in hand.

After a short stroll, we came on a charming little temple, perched on the summit of a mound and ensconced in a group of majestic trees. "What a delightful Chartreuse, where one might pass so calmly the remainder of his days!" exclaimed Marcel. "By all means let us rest here."

While we caught sight of a little nook, so inviting to instal ourselves there for conversation

and drawing, if so disposed, we espied some pious pilgrims leisurely mounting the monticule by steps cut out in the rock on the side opposite to the one we had ascended.

Marcel, who had divined by some sort of instinct who were of the party, smiled to himself with evident satisfaction.

"Oh, indeed! It is a rendezvous," I-remarked, on quickly recognising our friends.

"Not at all. I assure you——"

"Oh, very well. Then we will hide ourselves to watch them, and see what they are going to do."

A thick fence of tamarind-trees served us as a screen.

O-Hana was running in advance with a great bundle of green leaves in her hand. On arriving on the elevated plat, she looked all around the empty space before the temple, and appeared astonished at seeing no one. Her countenance was overshadowed with disappointment in an instant. I pinched my friend's arm.

"Ah, my fine fellow! it seems to have been very nicely contrived. Whilst you, under the fine pretext of admiring beautiful scenery, draw me here, the artful little maiden, with the ostensible object of a pilgrimage, leads on her companions to countenance by their presence an amorous rendezvous. You do not stir from here, and this is the penalty."

The three ladies, during this interval, had begun their devotions. Each went in her turn to

deposit a green leaf on the altar of the god, sounded the temple bell, threw a *djou-mon-sen** into the trunk, prostrated herself three times, and then redescended the steps to mount them again, resting on each landing-place to repeat the genuflexions.

At the first descent, Marcel, supposing it was a definitive departure, sprang out of his hiding-place, but I detained him fortunately, for, at this moment, O-Hana returned to continue her sort of *chemin de croix*.

The bundles of leaves being very large, God knows how long it would have taken to arrive at the last leaf. At the end of a quarter of an hour, being fatigued with our rôle of observers, we went, so soon as the backs of the three ladies were turned, to seat ourselves on the steps of the temple.

O-Hana was the first to perceive us, but she affected not to notice anything, and approached almost to our feet with her eyes cast down. As to her sister and their friend, they seemed to be a little disconcerted. Taken unawares, they felt much embarrassed, and hesitated a moment to continue their pious and fatiguing promenade. We prevailed on them, however, to resume and finish their devout exercise, which they did with exemplary piety.

When all the leaves were laid down, one by one, on the altar of the god, it was late; the hour we should have returned to our guests had already struck some time.

* A small copper coin.

The dinner, prepared with special care to do us honour, brought together a delightful party full of good-humour and merriment. They sang and related anecdotes and stories. Ouyeno, slightly *gris*, proposed even to accompany the Frenchmen into their country with his wife and sister-in-law. At one in the morning we were still among cups of tea and flasks of *saké*.

The rest of the night was short enough, for at daybreak Marcel was again on his feet.

"Quick!" he cried to me.

I was out in an instant. "Is the house on fire?" I asked, rubbing my eyes.

"It is a matter quite as serious—we start."

"But what is the meaning of this freak?"

"Well! There are my chronometers, you know."

The long and short of it was, our officer in charge of the chronometers had forgotten on leaving to instruct a comrade to wind up his "gimcracks," and in a few hours more they would run down. Through this piece of thoughtlessness we had to suffer, for our pleasure was suddenly cut short.

I dressed myself in a hurry, in a rage all the time at this stupidity. The incident was not very serious, but a sense of duty urged us to endeavour to avoid the consequences of the blunder.

"Do you expect to arrive in time?"

"Yes; it is now five, and if I can be on board at half-past ten honour will be safe and sound."

"Then we start."

We were now quite ready; but it was necessary to take leave of our hosts and make our situation known to our companions. The difficulty was to make them understand it. The good people could not account in any way for our whim; but O-Hana helped us out of the dilemma.

"Don't you see," she said to our hosts with an authoritative tone she well knew how to assume when expedient, "that you are detaining the *idjin-san* by your needless questions? If they are bent on getting back to Yokohama, without losing time, it is because they have, doubtlessly, a very good reason for it, and if you understand nothing whatever about the business, why trouble your heads about it?" Then, turning to us she said: "We are ready to start as soon as you like."

Our things are packed up in a hurry, we take a hasty meal, say "good-bye," and, at a quarter past six, we start at full speed in the direction of Yokohama.

Our runners, allured by the promise of an important *pourboire*, *itchiban*, race over the plain like coursers. Unluckily, frequent hills intervene to arrest their progress. Marcel looks feverishly at his watch every minute. One hour more; then, half-an-hour; at last we arrive at the French *attoba*.* Without losing time in paying for our vehicles we jump into a *foune*.† At the moment the officer of the watch, astonished at our prompt return, receives us at the side, eleven *piquent*.‡

* Slip.

† Boat.

‡ A sea term.

"Too late!" exclaims the Breton in despair. Then without stopping an instant, without taking the proffered hands of his comrades, like one seized with some sudden and terrible colic, he rushes to his cabin. But a joyful exclamation soon bursts forth, and Marcel speedily reappears, fluttering with excitement. "They are going!" he cries, "they are still going!"

The quarter-master of the steerage, Kerlaradec, gravely occupied in cleaning lamps at the ward-room door, regarded with a suppressed smile this scene so puzzling to everybody. His jolly face was beaming with some secret joy.

"There, that is the good fellow who has thought of you," I said to Marcel.

"That is true," he replied, "and another time I shall sleep *sur mes deux oreilles*. Ah! if I were the Minister of the Navy, Kerlaradec should be—but I am not the Minister of the Navy. Never mind, I will do him a good turn some day."

We were too elated at this *dénouement* to think anything more of the vexatious interruption of a day's pleasure.

CHAPTER XVII.

OSAKA—DANCING GIRLS OF THE *CHIBAI-YA*.

- A Recall to China—Separation—Parting Letter from O-Hana—Marcel's Discomfiture—Kobé—Osaka—An Evening's Amusement in a *Yadoya*—The *Guécha*—A *Chibai-ya*—An Embarrassing Matutinal Bath—Passage from Osaka to Foushimi—Japanese Phlegm—Arrival at Kiôto.

THE time for us to return to China, and to be recalled from there perhaps to France, was fast approaching. Our commanding officer, having received a telegraphic despatch ordering him to get the steam up in twenty-four hours, would accord to his officers no more permissions of absence from Yokohama.

O-Hana, to whom Marcel had never replied categorically on the eventuality of a departure, which would be sooner or later, seemed now to have a presentiment of some great grief. Her exquisite feminine sensibility secured her against any possible self-deception.

For several days past I had noticed in our sweet friend an inward trouble that was beyond

her power to dissimulate. Her large black eyes slightly moist with rising tears, interrogated us with deep anxiety. She yearned to put a question, and yet trembled to hear unwelcome news. Very often at the time of our daily visit I could plainly see her watching our arrival from afar; but when we entered, we found she had disappeared. I soon discovered the reason for this procedure on the part of the young girl. Immediately she caught sight of her friends, confident in the power of the *Kami*, she went, with all that naïve simplicity so conspicuous in her character, to prostrate herself at the feet of the little idol in her chamber, supplicating him to avert, or at least retard, the fatal blow.

"What will you do when you will be obliged to depart?" I said gravely to Marcel. "Do you think you will have firmness enough to go to the loving creature and tell her the hard truth?"

"Yes," he replied calmly, but the tone betrayed his emotion. "It will be for me a relief, but a relief mixed with some bitterness. And then, am I not bound to give her this last satisfaction? Why break this pure, childlike heart in affecting indifference? And yet, have I not already clung too long to evil ways in fostering this affection, in permitting it thoughtlessly to develop without object and without hope? Instead of stirring up again this love by a long, fond leave-taking, would it not be better to act as in duty bound, hard as it may seem in her eyes?"

The day after this conversation, an evening at the end of April, the order to depart came.

I went to inform Marcel.

"It was to be expected, of course," he replied, calmly at first; then dwelling on the idea of separating himself from O-Hana, he felt his firmness give way. He dreaded the tears of his dear friend, and dared not evoke her simple-hearted despair.

What was to be done in such a dilemma? I persuaded him to remain on board, and I went ashore at my usual hour. I took quite mechanically the way to the Benten, and, allowing myself to be guided by chance, hoping perhaps to find in the inspiration of the moment the means of breaking to our good friends that we should see them no more, I went up as usual to the shop and knocked at the door.

I affected a gaiety of manner perhaps exaggerated; but for me, however, the satisfaction was not simulated. The prospect of finding myself in a few months again in my native land filled my heart with gladness.

O-Hana was not mistaken. Her poor little heart was cruelly wrung with unsparing grief. She burst into tears, and did not say a word about Marcel. Perhaps she instinctively felt that the slightest allusion was a dagger rankling in her breast. I left her, however, without any explanation.

We were to leave the country about ten in the morning. At half-past nine a *foune* comes alongside the larboard. The *sendo* hands a letter to one of the steersmen of the watch addressed to my

friend, and immediately pushes off from the ship without waiting for a reply.

Marcel opened with a trembling hand the silky Japanese paper. It was a letter from O-Hana, and this is the literal translation of its contents :

"It is in vain that thou hast desired to hide it from me," she said to him ; "it is in vain that I have implored the *Kami*, thou art going away, I know it well. The pang that I felt in my heart on seeing thee yesterday morning for the last time, revealed to me that the hour I dreaded so much would now soon come.

"Oh, lord of my soul, hast thou understood my love ? Thou goest away, and thou leavest thy 'little flower,' which thou hast cherished so much. Thou goest toward the distant shores of thy fine country.

"Why dost thou not permit me to accompany thee ? I would be thy friend, thy faithful servant, thy submissive slave. Alas ! poor creature, I had clung to illusions too sweet. I imagined, silly thing, to keep thee near me always.

"Farewell, then, to thee, whom nothing can detain ; thee, who wilt be my only thought, be happy ! May the *Kami* and the *Hoboké* protect thee on the perfidious seas ! But, I conjure thee, when among all the women of thy race, not to forget the maid of the Benten who has given thee her life, and who regrets she was not able to prove to thee her tender love."

We started in favourable weather, and the three

hundred and sixty miles that separated Yokohama from Kobé were soon accomplished. Thirty-two hours after our departure, we dropped our anchor in the pretty little port of Hiogo.

I had arranged some time since with a few of my comrades to visit the great city of Osaka on the first favourable opportunity. We had applied to the Japanese Government for authorisation to travel beyond the limits of territory open to Europeans, and to go as far as Kiôto, the holy city.

Besides the ordinary curiosities of this ancient city, a fresh interest at that moment attracted a multitude of visitors within its walls. A universal exhibition, organised, it was said, with much taste and installed in the Yoshio—the palace abandoned by the Mikado in 1870—offered for the first time a very complete collection of the innumerable products of Japanese art and manufacturing industry.

Marcel, my inseparable companion wherever I went, was still too painfully engrossed with Yokohama—too full of dearly cherished souvenirs—to think of taking any pleasure so little in harmony with the subject over which he so passionately brooded. He could not think without a deep, tender melancholy of his little flower of the Benten, his blithe daily companion, his interesting little Japanese preceptress. Her tears had more profoundly moved him than he was willing to admit to himself; and he felt the mourning of the separation still too recent to think of mixing in

the amusements of his lively and too thoughtless countrymen.

But after a day's hesitation, certain besides of not finding later another so good opportunity to visit this important province of Japan, he yielded to our pressing solicitations, and joined our party.

Osaka is one of the largest cities of the empire. Placed at the remotest end of the gulf formed by the eastern extremity of the inland sea, its situation is most remarkable from every point of view. It has had rail communication with Kobé—twenty-five miles distant—for a long time, and it has just been united by another line to Kiôto, which is to be prolonged to Yokohama, when there will be railway accommodation throughout to Yeddo.

As our putting in at Kobé was to last twelve days, leave from ship duty was accorded to the officers, that they might make the trip to Kiôto; on condition, however, that the service would not be prejudiced. With this object it was necessary to concert measures together. We could very well divide our complement into two, and then those officers not disposed to roam could do duty for the rovers, taking their turn on another occasion. This was cheerfully arranged, and our pleasure party was composed of the doctor, young Sylvain the midshipman, and the two "Japanese brothers."

We started from Kobé about noon, under a radiant sun, and we landed in an hour at Osaka in a flood of rain. It was a bad prospect, but too late to draw back.

The *djin-ri* *ki* crowded around us.

"*Idjin-san, idjin-san,*" they bawled out to us from all parts.

"How much to draw us to Kiôto?"

"Five *rio* per *djin-riki-cha* and one *rio* for the extra drawer."

"It is too dear."

"We will not go for less. It is raining; the roads are bad. It is a very hard pull. No, we will not go."

"That will afford us the pleasure of waiting here the return of fine weather."

While the doctor and Sylvain, whose hours of leave are nicely computed, dispute and at last consent to pay the price demanded, twice as much as it ought to be, the "Japanese brothers" slip off, but not without wishing their impatient companions joy of their bargain.

We soon make our way into the city in triumph, with our knapsacks on our backs and umbrellas overhead.

Osaka, called also Naniwa—flower of the waves—is not a remarkable city. Standing on each bank of the Kamo-gawa, an immense river, its long streets run parallel out of sight, intersected at right angles with a tiresome regularity. Then beyond one another there is a series of canals, again straight and parallel. A few fine shops display their fancy articles, where Europeans from Kobé come to make their purchases. Temples abound as everywhere else. A rather fine citadel rises on an elevation, and then there is the mint.

Besides these there was nothing that we had not already seen scores of times, and which I have not elsewhere described. I shall therefore not undertake to make it the subject of a special chapter.

The state of the weather did not invite us to mount the citadel or to go and see them coining the *rio*, unless in the disguise of mandarin ducks; we therefore decided to spend the evening in continuing our study of the manners of the people, after we had made inquiries as to the most convenient and economical means of reaching Kiôto the next morning.

We went over a bridge, and seeing a signboard the other end, we found our way down to the water, where two or three steam *founé* were preparing to start.

"Captain, where are these vessels going?"

"To Foushimi."

"When do they leave?"

"*Tada-ima*—this instant."

"It is too soon. At what time to-morrow?"

"At nine, twelve, and three o'clock."

We now had the desired information. From Foushimi to Kiôto the route is short. The question now was to find a night's lodging in a respectable and comfortable house.

The rain is excessively disobliging. The people appear to me less civil, less courteous than I have found them elsewhere. What is the reason of that ill-favoured look, I see, those furtive, suspecting glances? Are we in an enemy's country? No, they are still our good Japanese around us.

But dismal remembrances arise in my mind. This was the theatre of the last of the sanguinary dramas that cast a gloom over the days of our first sojourn in Japan. It was here, or in the environs, in 1868, that a French sloop-of-war had its crew almost entirely massacred. Could this lugubrious incident be still present in the memory of these good people? Do they hold themselves continually on the defensive, fearing reprisal? No, there is no ground for such a notion. A serious reflection convinces us that our depressed spirits alone had conjured up evil looks in men and things around us.

We went our way chatting together, asking those whom we met, who seemed to have nothing repulsive in their composition, for the address of a respectable *yado-ya*, and arrived at a European hotel, where a big Englishman with hair very much like tow—the proprietor, no doubt—was anxious to entertain us. But this was not what we wanted. To drink hot whisky out of rummers, to eat roast-beef with electro-plated forks, was not at all what we were disposed to undergo.

What we wanted was to sip yellow tea out of Lilliputian cups, and get tipsy on white *saké*. We wished particularly to eat Japanese rice with the “gastronomic” eating-sticks. We desired, in short, to live in Japan a Japanese life.

The landlord with the hempen locks, astonished, scandalised by the indifference with which his offers were disregarded, shows no desire to retain us, and regards with a bewildered look the two

simpletons, who, despising the refinements of his *cuisine*, have already left in search of a native bungler in the art of cookery.

We soon alight on a vast establishment, and it is evidently such a one as we are looking for. It is a house with a large front, little piles of salt at the door, an immense public room on entry, where may be seen lounging about more than fifty people, of all ages and both sexes, some sitting, some squatting, others eating, drinking, or smoking, a few sleeping, and most of them conversing together. Many *né-san*, some looking sportive and even mischievous, are flitting among this motley crowd distributed in the greatest disorder. Then there are stoves in the back and pastry and black-puddings in the window in front; we therefore presume we have alighted on the grand hotel of the city.

To enter, to jabber in our Japanese, to ask for something to eat and drink, a bed, and everything we wanted, and to make our terms while rallying the servants—all this was no sooner thought of than put into execution.

Everything seemed encouraging; one trifle, however, attracts the attention of our hostess. "*Idjin-san anata-gatani ii makoura wa arimasen,*" she says decisively. What is it?—Pillows.

About six months previously—*rokka-getsou mai*—some American naval officers alighted at her *yado-ya*. The *Danna-san* were delighted, everything was delicious; the rice appetising, the fish dressed to a turn, the tea perfumed, the *saké* ex-

quisite. These lords had brought some *bouido-chû* (wine) which goes off like petards (champagne). After many songs and toasts to the United States, bed-time arrives.

"I want a pillow," says one; "we want pillows," the others reply in chorus.

"But, my lords, you have them!"

"What is it that you call a pillow?"

"These lacquered *makoura*, quite bright and new!"

"That is a good joke."

And in less than five minutes the house is turned upside down. The honourable gentlemen would have pillows. What was to be done? There were none. The uproar wakes up all the guests, and neighbours rush in. The hubbub begins to rise to a mutiny, when a servant espies a bundle of rice-straw, rolls it up in an old *kimono*, and presents it to the citizens of the New World. This expedient calms the madcaps. Each, in the end, furnished with his bundle of straw, disappears behind his screen and slumbers to the general satisfaction. But the commotion was so outrageous that they had fear of a serious conflict, and the worthy *oba-san* by no means desired to-day a repetition of the scene.

"Be quite easy on that score, my good woman," said Marcel, showing her our travelling rugs carefully rolled up. "Here are our pillows and if you have nothing better to offer us, we shall be content with them. And now we should like something to eat."

In Japan the table—if there is one—is quickly laid, but generally there is none at all, and the supper is then laid on the ground on the white mats of the floor.

We have not long to wait. A little round wooden trough, very clean, contains the rice which, in the way of bread, we shall consume liberally. The different meats of our "Balthazar," cooked fish, raw fish, poultry cut up in petty morsels, cakes of all kinds and all colours, fruits and dainties of all sorts, are placed in large dishes like our saucers in French restaurants.

Two young *mous'-mé*, appointed to wait on us, present us with little plates full of rice, delicate little eating-sticks scrupulously clean, and request us to take our seats.

Then begins a comedy. Marcel being more pliant, gravely seats himself on his heels, but, as for myself, after tiring efforts to be enabled to assume a position so marked with local colouring, I end by falling heavily on the posterior part of my person, thrusting out my legs into the middle of the symmetrically-arranged *couvert*.

My fall was followed by a ringing burst of laughter from the pretty servants; they were holding both their sides, and were on the point, perhaps, in this uncontrollable fit of merriment, to roll on the ground, when Oba-san in compassion came to put an end to their irreverent roar, bringing me a *taiko*, a kind of tamburin in lacquered wood, about ten or twelve inches high, upon which I settled myself as well as I could.

Being now comfortably installed, we did honour to the *cuisine* of the distinguished *chef* of the place, sending him from time to time our compliments and congratulations. Mesdemoiselles Karou and O-Tchi-o, our *femmes de chambre*, conscientiously acquitted themselves of their duties, laughing in their sleeves all the time at the awkward fashion with which the Western men used the eating-sticks, so different from their dexterous and graceful handling.

At the end of an hour's active work we declared ourselves satisfied; something, however, was still wanting: but what? While Marcel was considering what it was, I turned out of my knapsack a bottle of Chambertin. Marcel was enraptured at the sight of this delicious wine, which, after having traversed the seas and been heated by the fiery climate of Cochin-China, had resumed in the temperate region of Japan all its richness and vigour, and its character as the true nectar of men.

While we were enjoying this exquisite wine, relating amusing incidents to our merry servants, night had come and it still rained. What were we to do to pass away the evening? We should have been happy to have found an agreeable person to give us some information about Osaka, its origin, its history, and present position, and to relate to us some old legends of the country.

Unfortunately, our frolicsome *né-san* were not well-informed, and our questions had no other response than noisy laughter without reason. The

class *mous'-mé* of Japan decidedly does not surpass that of the *maritornes* in our French inns for intellectual training and good manners.

We were, therefore, obliged to resign ourselves to our fate, and to be contented to gather from their society as much amusement as they were capable of affording us.

The word *chibai-ya* was uttered to the great delight of the girls, and the babbling group soon abandoned the other travellers to gratify their curiosity around the Europeans. We then sent for the *guécha*, without whom a *chibai-ya* would have been as insipid as a quadrille without violins.

Chibai-ya comes from *chibai**—"theatre"—and *ya*—"house." The word improperly used by the Europeans is, nevertheless, well understood by the people of the country.

A *chibai-ya* is composed of a series of pantomimes, of scenes more or less characteristic of, and played by women, and of a kind of vocal diversion named *tchion-kina*, in which they play forfeits, taken successively from the different portions of the dress. In this entertainment, the dancing girls, divided into two camps, make gestures that have all a conventional signification.

Here are a few taken at random :

The closed fist represents a stone. The open hand extended horizontally indicates a sheet of

* The *chibai* was formerly the place reserved before the temples for representing religious scenes and mystic dances.

paper. The fore and middle finger opened in the form of V, the others being doubled back on the palm, are the image of a pair of scissors.

Attaka-san, for instance, presents her closed fist to her friend, *Kinougasa-san*; the moment the latter offers to her the scissors, the stone being of a nature that would break the scissors, *Kinougasa-san* pays a forfeit. But if *Attaka-san* presents, instead of her fist, her open hand, a symbol of a sheet of paper, she is beaten by the girl with the scissors, because the scissors cut the paper. And finally, if the stone and the paper are produced together, the victory is with the paper, which may envelope the stone.

There is an indefinite series of signs contesting the advantage over one another, and the great merit of the dancers is to be able to produce unknown ones. Most of them are of questionable taste, and accordingly, they excite to the highest point the interest of the native spectators, whose delight arrives at a paroxysm when, in consequence of the number of forfeits given, all the actresses, except one only proclaimed "victorious," find themselves denuded of the last and thinnest of their veils. Then begins the *chiri-fouri*,* a very indelicate dance, which generally winds up the *chibai-ya*.

The *guécha* are artists, musicians by profession, who play the *chamiceu* and sing to accompany the

* *Chiri* signifies "dance," and *four*i that part of the human body which it is now the fashion to make the most of by a contrivance euphemised as a "dress-improver."

dancers. Generally more chaste, the *gûcha* modestly retire behind a screen before the end of the *chibai-ya*, which is allowed to arrive at its epilogue. Clad in brilliant and fanciful costume, they execute also feats of dancing, singing all the time, and assume poses full of grace, infinitely preferable to the exhibition of the brazen little ladies of the *chibai-ya*.

When our musicians were introduced we had already put on our Japanese night-dress, consisting, during winter, of a large *robe de chambre* of blue cotton with large stripes, quilted, and about two or two and a half inches thick. In this costume we had a genuine Japanese look, and we received these ladies with all the respect due to their talent.

The usual salutations and compliments having ended, the fête begins. At first the joyous troop appear calm and becoming in their demeanour; each in her turn delivers a couplet while cutting a caper. The scenes succeed each other, gradually becoming more animated and more high-seasoned; then with the *saké* and the tobacco aiding, they get "elevated," and commence a bacchanalian dance, accompanied with shouts of laughter from all sides. It would be too embarrassing to give a description of these orgies, and I shall refrain from making the attempt. It was now already midnight, and in the morning we were to take the steamboat for Foushimi and Kiôto; we therefore retired, to the great disappointment of the artists, who continued the exercise for their own diversion, exulting in the grossness of the scene.

Oba-san at last put an end to the entertainment, and ten minutes afterwards our *guécha*, warmly wrapped in their silk mantles, with their *chamicen* under the left arm, their hands tucked under their sleeves, marched off to their chambers, whilst the dancers, again transformed into servants, brought out the beds, and arranged them for the accommodation of our wearied limbs on the floor just occupied by the ball.

When Marcel came to me the next morning to tell me it was high time to get up, I had a good mind to send him I was so very comfortable in this little nest of *f'ton*. Why could we not take the twelve o'clock boat? I thought. Completely roused, however, by the just observation of my friend, I wriggled, but with some difficulty, out of the heap of accumulated *mosen* in which I was buried, and while Marcel was freezing in the court in going through his ablution at a bowl of gold-fish, I leapt into a great barrel placed upright on a tripod, where I fully expected to find the water still tepid.

Just at this critical moment the whole house begins to stir. From every corner and recess emerges one of the bees of this veritable human hive. I recognise from one side, then another, a *danseuse* of the preceding evening. Each salutes me with a most gracious smile, wishing me the "good morning" of the English—*O-haïo danna-san*.

Marcel, who is as red as the fish he has just stirred up in their habitat, announces his entry by

a shout of laughter on seeing my head emerging from my singular bath, and begins to suspect I am half-cracked. But the calm demeanour of the people of the house reassures him ; the attitude of one of the *né-san*, crouching at the foot of my barrel, and relighting the fire beneath, demonstrates to him clearly that he was wrong in going among the fish to be struck with chill, and that I had well chosen the right spot. He was preparing even to recommence his ablutions when a loud whistle reminds us of the steamboat for Kiôto, and as she slips her moorings at nine, we have no time to lose.

Then an unforeseen difficulty presents itself. When I jumped into my bath, every one was still in bed. Imagining I had no reason to fear any unguarded eyes or indiscreet glances, I naturally did not encumber myself with clothing that was not required. But in the space of five minutes the scene entirely changed, a score pair of eyes at least were cognisant of everything taking place in the great room. It was therefore incumbent on me to watch the favourable moment to abandon my hiding-place in the most becoming manner possible. The feat appeared to me so very difficult to accomplish that, disregarding all dignity, I was about to spring resolutely out of my barrel, when I perceive a jolly Japanese, like myself *in puris naturalibus*, coming to occupy with the most phlegmatic indifference the hogshead next to mine. This Japanese was closely followed by another, then by a family, composed of the father, the

mother, and the two daughters ; then by a second family ; finally, the whole household, in the state of our first parents antecedent to their scanty costume, were soon immersed in the eight or ten barrels arranged along the walls.

Emboldened by example, and on the other hand being little desirous of the society—by far too intimate—of three or four “companions of the bath” of both sexes, I lost no time in decamping from my embarrassing retreat and in dressing myself as if to escape from a fire.

When we went with our knapsacks on our backs and umbrellas in hand to settle our bills and take leave of our obliging hosts, we found Obasan and her young handmaidens ready to pour out the parting-cup. Having paid the bills without any complaint and every one being satisfied, we distributed a few *pourboires* and prepared to take the road to the quays. But Japanese etiquette required our masters and their servants to come and formally thank the travellers who had honoured their house, and prostrate themselves at their feet, muttering all the time, *Oki-arignato-san*, “many thanks,” which we thought would never end.

The whole female portion of the establishment were in movement ; some came adjusting with an awkward hand the girdle of their *kimono*, others drawing on a sleeve or making efforts to secure the little red apron that served them as a *pantalon*. We soon beat a retreat before this motley group and their interminable homage, and having go

clear of the threshold, we saw on turning round a bevy of little Venuses rising from the wave, who had jumped out of their hogsheads to wish us a good journey and God-speed.

We leapt into a *djin-riki-cha*, and a gallop of our *djin-ri' ki* soon brought us to the jetty. We were only just in time, for the boat immediately slipped her cable and, the current helping, shot at full speed towards the shores of Foushimi. As there was nothing very attractive in the passage, we installed ourselves with the sole object of making ourselves as comfortable as possible.

It was intolerable remaining on deck, such as it was, but there was nothing like a deck on this sort of craft covered with an awning; and to add to our discomfort, the wind, that had succeeded the rain of yesterday, blew sharply from the north and parched our faces; we were therefore forced to remain below and ensconce ourselves as well as possible in the very restricted space allotted to the passengers.

The first cabin, occupying the fore part of the boat, about 10½ feet long and nearly 5 feet wide, was quite void of seats. About a score of Japanese of both sexes were squatting on their heels on the *tatami*, apparently quite at their ease, and happy in their habitual occupation of tea-making and stuffing their tiny pipes. It seemed to me, compressed as they were like herrings in a barrel, impossible to escape cramps and tingling in every limb.

The place of honour, that is the fore part of the cabin, was reserved for foreigners. At my urgent request, and to my satisfaction that I had made myself understood, they brought me a little stool; but Marcel made himself comfortable in a corner in a less elevated posture.

Every one was engaged in conversation, and an easy gaiety pervaded the throng of passengers. Each little group chatted about their personal affairs and the events of the day. The exhibition of Kiôto, the object of the excursion for most of the travellers, was the common theme. From time to time, conversation became general between the various groups, and I remarked that there never ceased to reign among these good people, mostly of the class of petty traders, the most cordial understanding and exemplary good manners.

An officer of the infantry of the guard, squatting near us, began to address us, and we entered into conversation as well as we could, considering that he knew as much of French as we did of Japanese; but after all we succeeded in making ourselves mutually intelligible.

"But what is that fearful noise?" I inquired. "Is our vessel going to break in two?"

"It is an accident to the engine, and no one troubles himself about it because it happens so often."

Our new friend revealed to us the danger with the coolest indifference.

"It is not uncommon," he said, "to see boats

like these blow up, for they have high-pressure engines that are very bad, and worked by engineers still worse."

This information, which we by no means regarded with the same indifference, made us regret that we had not, like the doctor and Sylvain, gone by land.

During this racket I was observing our fellow-travellers, and I particularly remarked the countenances of the women and young girls. They were perfectly composed ; not the slightest movement of a muscle of their faces was visible, and, of course, none of those shrill, piercing cries so disagreeably uttered by our Frenchwomen in the least danger, imaginary or real, and so often pernicious, escaped from the little mouths of these Eastern women. It is, besides, one of the characteristic traits of the Japanese to refrain from giving way to emotion, at least in appearance, and to bear suffering with a stoicism worthy of heroic times.

I remember an instance of this that redounds to the honour of the Japanese women.

While sojourning at Yokohama I was invited to Yedo by a high Government functionary, and I passed the night in his *yasiki*. My chamber was next to his wife's apartments, my bed was close against the paper partition stretched across and separating the two rooms, and a good sail-maker's needle would easily have traversed the obstacle that rose between the lady's bedroom and my own.

This night I did not sleep soundly for the first time and, as I stretched myself on the *f'ton*, the cold penetrated sharply through the spaces badly closed. About one o'clock in the morning, I distinctly heard several persons walking about and talking in my neighbour's chamber. I supposed that the mistress of the house was troubled with insomnia, and, concluding that she was offering to her women, and perhaps others, a nocturnal and clandestine entertainment, I turned round on my other ear and lay thus till morning without closing my eyes.

When I came down, my host advanced and announced to me with evident satisfaction, that his wife during the night had rendered him a happy father of a fine boy.

"Where did the event take place?" I asked. "Yesterday in showing me over your house you pointed out to me madame's apartment, and if I am not mistaken I must have slept very near."

"Precisely; quite touching. And you have been disturbed, I fear, by the movements of the servants."

"I have heard, it is true, some walking about and talking in a low voice, but not the slightest utterance of complaint."

And the following day, when I congratulated the happy mother and expressed my admiration of her courage :

"Women who cry out in such a circumstance," she replied, "are *baca*."

Baca is a term of contempt, signifying stupid, weak, imbecile.

What is the cause to be attributed to this extraordinary courage, this endurance under suffering? Is it the nature itself of the individual, whose nervous system is less highly developed than in the Western races? Or can it be the result of education?

When one has seen the agile *betto* at work, who are capable of sustaining a run, trotting and galloping for several hours without repose and without fatigue, and when one has admired the intrepid and sinewy acrobats so common in Japan, it would be an error, I think, to suppose that the Japanese phlegm arose from a lymphatic temperament.

I believe, then, that their chivalric education, wherein the point of honour is elevated to the highest degree, united with the idea of fatalism, is the principal cause of this almost incredible force of self-control, assuming the outward aspect of apathy—a force we seem hardly able to acquire.

After the accident to the machinery the movement seemed to be accelerated, but it was not due to the current, for that had become slower. It was the captain's honour at stake. A rival boat was pursuing us at the risk of bursting her boiler, and the only question was not to suffer her to pass us, *coûte que coûte*.

This sort of steeple-chase, if it did not plunge

us into the deep, had at least the advantage of enabling us to gain an hour. We were therefore, very glad, for the sun was sinking in the horizon, last night's supper was remote, and we had—to use a vulgar phrase—*l'estomac dans les talons*.

The caterer on board sold excellent cakes made of rice flour, and we consumed a large quantity; but we found them insufficient for stomachs habituated to a more nitrogenous nourishment, and in spite of the courtesy and kindness of our neighbours, who offered us some of their dainties, we longed for the moment when we could indulge in the savoury dishes of Monsieur Nakamoura's table at Kiôto, whose establishment had been highly recommended to us.

Foushimi at last came in sight, and every one sighed with relief. They speedily gathered up their scattered nicknacks, stretched their arms and legs, and then jumped joyously ashore. To secure two *djin-riki-cha* well trained, and start at a gallop, was the work of a moment. The wind commenced to blow with increased violence, and our poor *kourouma-hiki* began to lag with fatigue; but as we made it a point to arrive before midnight, they kept their promise to accomplish the journey in three-quarters of an hour, and won their well-earned *pourboire* when they set us down at the door of Nakamoura's hotel.

Sylvain and the doctor, who had arrived in the morning, had visited the principal curiosities of

the city, and were finishing the day before a very tempting roast turkey.

"Oh, here you are at last! How is it you are so late?" they exclaimed.

But without listening to their questions and troubling to answer them, we commenced taking the turkey by assault.

After we had been condemned to live on little cakes for twenty-four hours, our eagerness was excusable; but after the turkey there was a calm, and we were then prepared to listen to the incidents of our friends' nocturnal journey. They had been jolted all the night through over roads full of ruts and pools, in floods of rain. Shut in by their varnished paper curtains they had seen nothing beyond the bobbing backs of their runners; but in spite of all, dripping and covered with mud, they had arrived in good spirits. We then made them relate to us what they had seen in their rapid promenade through the imperial city and, anticipating the pleasure in store for us, we soon arrived tranquilly at that bodily condition when our eyes, after a long day's fatigue, wound up by a good supper, involuntarily closed. We slept with that profound slumber seldom accorded to mortals except in compensation to those who gain their living by the sweat of their brow.

We found the beds here comfortable in comparison with those of Osaka, due, no doubt, to the influence of the tourist. The *futon* was present, but the *makoura* was replaced by a true bolster,

and large napkins did the duty of sheets. These bits of calico, too short and too narrow to cover the mattress and make a good bed, were more embarrassing than useful, but to avoid wounding the *amour propre* of the landlord, we said everything in their praise, and if he believed it was sincere he ought to have been highly gratified with his European importation.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A VISIT TO KIÔTO AND ITS TEMPLES.

**First Day—A Bird's-eye View of Kiôto—Our Runners—
Yas—Japanese Procession—Visit to the Exhibition—
The Goshio—Admirable Lacquers and other Curiosities
—A Japanese Repast—Ginkakoudji—Some Temples—
A Monster Bell—Yas relates a Story—View of the
City at Sunset.**

AFTER a disreputable promenade in the paradise of Buddha and Shintô, I had gravely mounted a hippogriff and was cantering across a fantastic region, when a vigorous knocking at my door put an end to my extravagant dream and recalled me to practical life.

Our friends, burning to be aboard the following morning, had come with all this noise to wish us good-bye.

The day is only just beginning to break, and the ancient capital is still slumbering under the veil of a thick fog. We dress ourselves as hurriedly as possible, and while these gentlemen are taking a quick and frugal repast before mounting their light vehicles, I have gone into the garden of our

aydo-ya, and from this point of view—one of the highest in the city—I am endeavouring to form some orderly conception of the inextricable confusion of temples and buildings, religious and secular, that rise from among masses of fruit-trees covered with blossom, and all beautified with the iridescent reflections of a rosy sun just appearing through the haze on the horizon.

Kiôto, whose wondrous magnificence is spread before me, which I shall presently be enabled to admire to advantage in a quick run throughout in a *djin-riki-cha*, is one of the most ancient cities of Japan. Its foundation dates from the end of the eighth century, and it was a Mikado named Kwan-ou, reigning in the year A.D. 794, who made it the capital of Nippon, under the name of Heian.

Heian was, from this epoch, an important city, and has doubtlessly made very little progress. Condemned beforehand, like nearly all the cities of the nations of the extreme East, to a hopeless stagnation, we find it to-day much in the same state as it was ten centuries ago, in spite of the many battles of which it has been the theatre during the feudal and civil wars so frequent in this country.

This city is the richest in curiosities of all kinds; renowned temples and sanctuaries, potent idols, celebrated palaces, attractive gardens, and remarkable sites—everything abounds in this metropolis, which, till 1870, formed the residence of the son of the “Rising Sun.”

Manufactures and commerce are here very highly developed ; it is here that are woven those beautiful fabrics of silk and gold so often the object of our admiration at Mitani's ; it is here that is made the delicate porcelain, so highly esteemed in European countries, and taking its rank in excellence immediately after the Satsuma in the porcelain of Japan.

Just at the moment our friends turn the corner at a rattling pace, waving their hands in adieu, the two *djin-riki-cha* ordered over-night, punctually emerge from the other corner, and, without losing a moment, we are ready to start.

"*Dokoŋ oide maska idjin-san ?*"—Where do you wish to go, foreign gentlemen ?

"It doesn't matter ; where you like, my friends : to-day we have no settled plan, at any rate ; it is the right way to see a country about which we know but little."

Delighted with this liberty of acting, our men start off like greyhounds. The agility, the skill, and the heartiness of these poor people are quite unparalleled. One should see the dexterity with which they avoid an unforeseen obstacle, turn briskly a corner, stop short and start again among a bustling crowd. An accident never happens ; a collision, or as much as a slight push, is a thing unheard-of ; not a coarse word escapes their lips, insult they are incapable of ; their civility, indeed, is invariably conspicuous ; and when they stop, dripping with perspiration, their jolly faces are always beaming with smiles as they dry them with

the little blue-and-white kerchief that serves them to bind their hair.

After a giddy course, speed naturally slackens, and we soon come to a complete stop ; the ground rises, and the street is literally choked by a motley crowd, costumed and coloured with a carnival aspect. It is a masquerade, or something like it ; a procession, semi-religious, semi-profane, in honour of some god whose name I have forgotten.

If one recalls to memory the terrible accounts of the swordsmen, the sight of this crowd makes him tremble. A great number of these formidable-looking warriors, whose puckered, cast-off apparel I have often vainly searched for amid the old stores of Yokohama, are advancing armed to the teeth in front of the column.

We stand back quietly against the shops and allow the throng to pass on as we gaze with delight for more than three-quarters of an hour on the endless series of corporations, of men, women, and children, decked out in the most eccentric costumes.

As soon as the street is clear, we resume our course, but this time it is not for very long. It is towards the exhibition that Yas, the leader of our *kourouma-hiki*, has thought proper to take us. Yas was decidedly right, the exhibition being the principal object of our journey.

The exhibition is installed in the Goshio, an ancient imperial residence and seat of the legitimate Government, before the fall of the Tykoons, at the time the Mikados, shut up and hidden from

the eyes of their subjects, no more reigned than they governed.

The Goshio, until this year, remained closed to the profane, and from the time it had been the residence of the Emperor, the *Kou-gé*, the grand dignitaries of the crown, only had access to its sacred precincts. It is therefore with a sort of respect mingled with fear, that the Japanese of the pure caste cross the threshold of this temple, prostrating their faces to the dust in veneration of a spot, at once the cradle and the tomb of their hereditary princes.

It is certainly the finest *yasiki* to be seen at present.

The Shiro, the ancient residence of the Tykoons at Yedo, ought to contain more magnificent relics of the time of their splendour, but now it is nothing but a ruin devastated by the conflagration, and difficult to restore in any way adequate to the dignity of his majesty the Mikado.

The Goshio is therefore the only princely residence that can, at present, give any true idea of that pompous luxury of Oriental courts.

The palace proper, called *Chichinden*, is situated with its dependencies within an enclosure of double walls pierced with nine gates of very remarkable architecture, called *Kiumon*. At the back, in the first enclosure, a great many buildings are grouped together, originally destined for the residences of the princes and great lords of the imperial house. This part of the Goshio is known by the name of *Cheiroden*.

The exhibition is disposed with much taste in the part called the *Chichinden*, and divided into three sections. I admire particularly the marvellous lacquers of the Mikado, the brilliant effect of which is heightened by thousands of precious stones; but when I find myself before a cuirass of forged steel, inlaid with gold and silver, or in presence of a vase of "Old Satsuma," I can hardly suppress a shout of admiration.

Marcel, getting impatient at my loitering so long before these wonders, draws me to the compartment of modern porcelain. In presence of the treasures of the Mikado, not to be acquired, there were no embarrassing consequences; but here in the porcelain department, where the rarities were for sale with their prices fixed, the ungratified temptation to buy, even beyond one's means, was an irremediable disappointment. Here were the *Satsuma* with their vernal blooming bouquets, then the *Kanga* with their rich purple and gold, the *Kiôto*, whose admirable designs were set off by a delicate yellowish tint, and finally the *Hizen*, and all the other series of porcelain so much esteemed in Japan.

After having traversed the whole of this Japanese palace and its gardens, we find our vehicles awaiting us and, trusting to the sagacity of Yas, we start without giving him any instructions. Our confidence was fully justified, for in ten minutes the intelligent *djuri' ki* stops, panting for breath, before a *yado-ya* of respectable appearance, the door of which is flanked with the custo-

mary three piles of salt, the indications of a liberal and fraternal hospitality.

Relying on finding later in the evening at the semi-European table of M. Nakamoura a more comfortable dinner, we take together a repast *à la japonaise* and, without even discharging our duty of politeness in according a quarter of an hour to the lady of the house, we begin at once, soon finish, and start again.

After the Goshio, Ginkakoudji was the next place to visit. Ginkakoudji (silver palace) is a little pavilion, constructed by the Tycoon Archikaga-Yochimara, A.D. 1400. This pompous *maire du palais*, about to make it his summer residence, perhaps a sort of Parc-aux-Cerfs, had displayed there incredible magnificence. The ceilings, covered with a thick layer of silver, a metal more rare, it is said, at this epoch than gold, represented an immense value; and the woodwork so elaborately and exquisitely carved, the hangings of silk and gold, the lacquered furniture — everything so brilliant, excellent and rare, gave to this habitation the character of a rich jewel.

But one day the devastating course of war passed this way, and victorious bands carried off the rich booty; still, the rapacious hands of the pillagers could not efface everything. The traces of silver are still visible, and sufficient of it remains to strike the visitors with astonishment as they stand before these precious relics of a time for ever memorable.

The garden amid which the Ginkakoudji rises

is one of the most beautiful in the country, wherein the art of Lenôtre is expanded to the last limits of taste. It is nothing but pretty pieces of water, little bridges, clumps of shrubs, labyrinths, winding pathways leading to mysterious bowers and miniature temples; trees of various kinds grafted on a single trunk; rocks full of niches, every hole containing a flower of a colour most artistically harmonising with that of another in juxtaposition.

We can hardly get away from this enchanting Eden, where we almost fancy, on evoking souvenirs of the past, Archikaga appearing in person, surrounded by his wives and all the paraphernalia of his magnificence.

Yas, surfeited with these splendours, draws us along. In this artistic and chivalric spot the temples and palaces absolutely jostle one another. We visit many, but I will not fatigue the reader with descriptions, or even an enumeration of them all.

Yas, making it a point of honour to satisfy the Danna-san so distinguished, has drawn up his plan for ending the day. The sun, already low in the horizon, promises hardly more than three hours of daylight, and these three hours will be employed in visiting the celebrated temple of Tchi-on-in, that of Gui-on, and the tower of Yasaka, and then we must make a pilgrimage, if we can, to the temples of Kiomidzou and of Higachi-otani.

The plan proposed by Yas is unanimously adopted by our two votes, and while we are con-

gratulating him on the intelligent manner in which he understands his business of cicerone we arrive at Tchi-on-in.

This temple dates from the commencement of the thirteenth century, about the time Buddhism began to spread in Japan. It was built by a priest of this religion, and has been enriched by the generous piety of its disciples and, though a long time the object of high veneration, it has not escaped the general indifference of the age. Pillaged at different times and ravaged during one of the late wars, it has been restored, and its vast space was selected as the site of the preceding and first exhibition.

On a hill a few hundred yards to the south-east, commanding the edifice, is a bell of enormous size and rather curious. Marcel, habituated to calculate dimensions, estimates its height at about six yards and a half; but Yas, quite a practical man, is not disposed to rely on a guess, and draws forth from his sleeve a packet of cord which he keeps in reserve to repair accidents to his vehicle and, quickly attaching a stone to one end, he adroitly throws it over the bell and allows it to descend on the other side, and the problem, to his satisfaction, is solved.

"Take it," says he, having cut off the length and handing it to us; "this is the way to know what you wish."

Marcel was not deceived; the length of the doubled string was just six yards and a half.

Yas could by no means understand the interest

we took in the height of the bell of Tchi-on-in, and his impatience was uncontrollable.

"Why do you stop in this way?" he said. "I want to show you the temple of Kiomidzou, and we must not overlook the temple of Gui-on."

The temple of Gui-on is generally considered the most elaborately finished and perhaps, the finest sanctuary of the capital, notwithstanding its small dimensions. Founded by the Mikado Sei-Wa about A.D. 859, it is built upon the plan of Chichinden, and presents in miniature an exact reproduction of this palace. The series of events through which this monument has passed is extraordinary; burnt, pillaged, rebuilt, then entirely demolished by an earthquake, it has been completely reconstructed on the primitive plan at a comparatively recent date.

On going from here to the tower of Yasaka, we pass before a *torige*,* raised with stones of extraordinary shape and size. It would be as well to stop a minute, but Yas, fearing, no doubt, a repetition of the farce of measuring by the cord, will not let us loiter at the spot. A priest of the temple of Gui-on, who, after having piloted us around the sacred building, thought it his duty to accompany us politely thus far, refuses any remuneration. This fact is rare enough to make a note of it, and to reconcile me with the bonzeian gentry.

* Gates at the opening of avenues leading to the Shintôist temples; these gateways of stone or wood, oftener of wood, are composed of two vertical posts with a cross-beam lightly resting on its two ends above.

The tower of Yasaka, overthrown and then rebuilt like the other edifices, merits, in my opinion, no particular praise.

We soon perceive the vast roof of Kiomidzou through the spaces in a veritable cloud of cherry-tree blossom, and, after ascending for a quarter of an hour between two ranges of porcelain shops, we alight at the door of the sanctuary.

Kiomidzou is the best situated temple of Kiôto. It was raised to the honour of the Daïrhi,* by the priest Tamouramaro, under the reign of Kwan-ou, and was for a long period the object of great veneration on the part of the subjects of the empire. And now, in spite of the incredulity and religious indifference of the Japanese, a crowd of pilgrims, still very considerable, come here daily to fulfil vows and ask for favours. Elevated on an immense timber-work overhanging a precipice, it is actually suspended over the abyss. Whilst we have advanced to the extremity of the wood-work, and are contemplating a magnificent panorama, Yas, having said his prayers, and inspired himself with the spirit of the god, draws near and tells us the following story :

"Formerly, during a period of a few years, when the faith was still in good earnest in these provinces, the heroes, before attempting an adventure, used to come here and kneel before the altar; they prayed a long time, sighed deeply to attain heaven, offered to the priest a *homotsou* † of some

* The Daïrhi are the dead Emperors, who are all deified.

† A present.

importance, and then resolutely threw themselves over the balustrade, against which you are now leaning, and came down with a crash in the little road there below. The survivors, and they were very rare," added our narrator, with amusing simplicity, "surely succeeded in their enterprises, and the others are become venerated saints and demi-gods, whose statues you may admire behind the rails of the porch."

While we are listening to this lugubrious narration, we throw a few trifling coins on the altar, which are quickly pocketed by the *bonzes* kneeling there under the pretext of some perpetual adoration, and, having no serious adventure in prospect, we scamper away, deferring to another epoch the experiment of the leap so esteemed, it seems, by our narrator.

At the bottom of the precipice, where one may *more conveniently* descend by means of a long wooden flight of about 150 steps, a pretty little spring still jets forth, and its purling and pattering and gurgling, as it descends in a light cascade, should formerly have formed a singular contrast with the solemnity of the place, and it was here where the doughty warriors, so far favoured as not to have been transformed into a shapeless mass after this terrific plunge, came probably to refresh themselves and wash their glorious contusions.

This sort of droll epic having somewhat tickled our fancy by its incongruous elements, we make the sacred precincts of the sanctuary resound

with the echoes of our joyous exclamations, and the sonorous notes of our hearty laughter penetrate the retreats of flocks of nocturnal birds roosting under the capacious wood-work supporting the Kiomidzou. Yas, quite scandalised, does not realise the meaning of the joy that opens our mouths so wide, but suspects, on regarding our countenances, that it may not be irrelevant to his story.

During this trifling, time was flying fast and the night coming on, and we had still one more temple to visit.

"No more temples to-day," said Marcel to me, "surely we shall have an indigestion ; fortunately, however, this is the last, and who knows, besides, whether the eloquent Yas does not keep in reserve for our entertainment another good story like that of Kiomidzou ?"

This anticipation gives a little vigour to our tired limbs, and when we arrive at Higachi-otani, our efforts are rewarded by a fairy-like spectacle.

Higachi-otani is the most modern of the temples of Kiôto. Built in 1690, in an imposing style of architecture, to receive the statue of Midabouts', then held in great veneration by the people, it is reached by a fine gate, called Karamon, and a long and wide avenue of bushy trees, whose cool shade during the heat of summer must be highly appreciated. From the top of the hill on which it rises, the whole city may be seen, and just at this moment we enjoy its magical effect. The evening is not yet so dark as to confound

everything in an impenetrable obscurity over this vast space. In the morning, from the high ground of Marouyama, we had assisted at the rising of this great city from among the bluish haze of the dawn, and now we see her busy at her nocturnal toilette.

It is the hour when the sun, now flooding with light another world, shoots over this, by refraction, its last fawn-coloured rays. A fiery light runs low over the edge of the horizon, large dark shadows spread over certain parts of the plain, whilst others become visible for a moment, to be immediately confounded with the general gloom. The veil gradually thickens, and now the sharp outlines of the roofs of a temple or of a *yasiki* in the distance are only dimly discernible an instant under a fitful gleam through the creeping shades of night.

All at once amid this darkness a star gleams, then ten, then a hundred. They are the lanterns with innumerable colours, the poetic night lamps of Japan, which have not yet been dethroned in the city of the "Son of the Sun" by such an innovation as flaring jets of gas.

The city is soon glimmering everywhere and the reflected light hovering above spreads afar, whilst the *chamien*, accompanied with a voice, sometimes slow and monotonous, sometimes quickened into an agitated rhythm, mingles its plaintive note with the low murmur of the night.

Marcel has lost his gaiety, and is become pensive. These mingled sounds of the night, that

harmony so well known of the *chamiceu*, transport him beyond the mountains to a land to the north of Nippon.

"What is my poor little, forsaken flower doing at this moment?" he wonders.

"She is singing, I dare say, and praying to the *Kami* for the well-beloved of her heart. Come now," I said, seeing him so deep in thought, "come, you overgrown child, you will see again one day your little flower of the Benten, fresher and more blooming than ever. And now, in the meantime, let us go and dine, and try to wind up our evening as pleasantly as we have begun it."

Yas, a little moody, it seems, through our jesting which touched his *amour propre* as a storyteller and a Japanese, remains as quiet as a mouse.

A penetrating cold has suddenly set in after the mild temperature of the day. Our drawers pull on their tight *culotte*, fasten close around their bodies their loose, flowing vest with full sleeves, and start off at full speed. The road is long, though only half-a-mile as the bird flies, separates us from the hotel; but the roads do not lead direct and we are obliged to go as far as the temple of Gui-on, and then proceed just as far in a contrary direction before we arrive at our destination.

At last, when seven o'clock is striking on all M. Nakamura's European clocks, we alight at

the door of his hotel, and there find awaiting us two old acquaintances of Yedo. As they are our countrymen we are all highly delighted, and the first thing we decide on after the mutual civilities are exhausted, is that we all sup together.

CHAPTER XIX.

AN EVENING AT THE THEATRE.

Outrageous Hilarity—The Theatre of Mimes—A Visit to the Green-Room.

WHILST M. Nakamoura is bringing out his old bottles of *boudo-chu*,* and Mesdemoiselles Kinougasa and Attaka are laying the table—for here we have a real table—Marcel, washing his hands all the time, takes it into his head to relate something facetious to our *femmes de chambre*.

The girls listen attentively at first without saying a word—Marcel with his mongrel Japanese being so very droll—they look at each other astonished, appear to reflect a moment, and then suddenly burst out in a loud peal of laughter.

But what they have understood, if anything, it is impossible to conjecture.

Just at this moment a new personage appears : it is the duenna charged with the washing of the dishes and plates, who in bringing in a large soup-

* Wine.

tureen, curiously inquires of her young colleagues the cause of their mirth.

The matter is made as intelligible as possible to the old shrew ; her sour look becomes still more sour, her lips curl up disagreeably, her little eyes twinkle, and then at the risk of breaking the precious dish entrusted to her care by M. Nakamoura, she starts backwards and gives vent to a long, loud, gurgling sound from her hoarse throat very much like the gobble of a turkey-cock. It is the simple expression of her high merriment.

The soup-tureen, the hope of our supper, in the hands of the tottering old woman runs the greatest risk ; but Marcel, anticipating the danger, fortunately seizes it.

The *né-san*, hardly recovered from a first surprise, recommence with outrageous hilarity at the sight of the convulsed matron ; it is no longer gaiety, it is a delirious revelling.

At this uproar, which has reached its possible climax, the master of the house makes his appearance with our countrymen at his heels, and we explain to them the situation. During this interval a calm begins to reign consequent on the confusion at this sudden fit, and the three women, with their eyes red with tears and their countenances tumefied with the muscular strain, make their escape as quickly as possible, but we still hear from afar continuous and intermittent shouts of that inextinguishable laughter which in certain natures becomes almost a physical suffering.

M. Nakamoura has no intelligible idea of the

matter and seems rather stupefied, but acting with a semblance of propriety, he laughs too upon trust, and begs us earnestly not to allow the soup to get cold, which he says he has expressly prepared for us with his own hands.

Among the curiosities of Kiôto are the theatres, made specially brilliant for the occasion of the exhibition. One company especially, composed of young girls, the eldest of whom is not seventeen, attracts the public particularly. Yas, on being consulted, warmly advises us to pass the evening at this theatre. Accordingly, after having dispatched the excellent repast provided by M. Nakamura, we take our way there.

When we make our appearance, we find the house full and the play begun; the door-openers with much trouble, at last make room for us in the right boxes, in a stall nearest to the stage. From there, as from a privileged box, we enter into the green-room, and if the place is not favourable to criticise the acting, it is excellent for Europeans more desirous of making studies of life than of sitting out a performance, the incidents of which it is difficult to understand.

A swarm of brown heads, bedecked more or less with ribbons, press on each other and stretch forward, overcome with curiosity, to see the foreigners. The dialogue is almost interrupted, and I perceive angry looks directed towards the European disturbers of the entertainment.

But we are actually innocent, and as the Japanese are reasonable and tolerant when political

passion does not intervene to heat their heads, they do not manifest their impatience in a very disagreeable manner. The curtain having closed, we go into the green-room and permit the little comedians to gratify their curiosity.

And it is with our pockets full of *kachi* and *teppo-dama** that we present ourselves to them.

In Japan, as elsewhere, most women, in this respect like children, are fond of delicacies and dainties; sweetmeats are always tempting, and, according to a certain vaudeville, they open their hearts to champagne and *marrons glacés*. In Japan it is still more primitive, and I will therefore leave it to be supposed what joy they manifest on seeing our riches displayed. It is quite a jubilant shouting, with stamping of feet and dancing in ecstasy; the little painted hands and bedaubed faces stretch towards us as the greedy heads of a nest of young sparrows are strained towards the mother on approaching the brood.

But we moderate our liberality in order that it may last out two intervals between the plays, and thereby double the value, and when the manager's whistle announces the rise of the curtain, these lollipop-loving little actresses plead with all their arts of cajolery for our return.

In the bustle of our entry, one particular, very odd, escapes us; on listening at first, and remarking in these graceful marionettes a tone of voice a little too masculine, we detect nothing absolutely

* *Kachi* signifies "cakes." The *teppo-dama*, word for word, "balls for the gun," are simply balls of gum.

abnormal; the ear becomes, however, gradually familiarised with the acoustic capacity of the house, and the secret is soon discovered. Our little actresses are as mute on the stage as they are full of prattle in the green-room, and confine themselves to making gestures, whilst two or three prompters, stationed in a railed box on the left of the stage, are declaiming with all their might every rôle.

From our place it is easy to follow all the attitudes of these actresses *in partibus*; to give greater semblance of reality to their accents, they demean themselves in their box of six square feet and gesticulate as if they were persons possessed.

Under these conditions the unity between the manner of acting and the recital seems impossible; one of our Yedo friends, knowing Japanese well enough to understand the connection with the action, affirms the contrary; the actors and the declamators sustain themselves in complete harmony in a manner worthy of the best orchestras, and this difficulty overcome would be, in the eyes of the Japanese, it seems, one of the greatest merits of this company of mimes.

If the guttural intonations regarded as classic at the theatre, grate upon our nerves a little, we follow with real pleasure, on the other hand, the expressive movements of these young girls, whether playful or grave, comic or serious, who seem to be on the boards as much for their own pleasure as that of the spectators.

The Japanese plays, when they are not a tissue

of farces "highly seasoned," are generally episodes more or less legendary of the lives of great men of Japan. It is, therefore, very difficult, without the help of an intelligent interpreter, to seize the sense of the plot and to follow it through all the intricate incidents arising out of its principal action. Not having the advantage of the erudition of our friend Ouyeno, or the nice interpretation of his intelligent sister-in-law, we did not this evening understand much of the dithyrambic tirades of the drama, with grand scenes, mimicked as they were with real talent by our little *bonbon*-gourmandising friends.

Marcel, again become pensive, wandered in imagination far from the theatre of Kiôto; moreover, it was late, and sleep was insidiously stealing on us. After having therefore emptied our pockets into the reticules of the pretty heroines and languishing pasteboard princesses, who came to transport us for a moment into the domain of Japanese chivalry, and after having taken a cordial farewell profuse in compliments, we made our way to our *yado-ya*, where, burying ourselves forthwith in a heap of *f'ton*, we soon fell into a deep slumber.

CHAPTER XX.

LEGENDS AND FRAGMENTS OF HISTORY.

The Second Day's Excursion—Biwa—Otsou—An Excursion to the Lake—A Singular Tree—Séta—The Temple of Ishiyama—The Legend of Koma-ti the Poetess—Hi-eizan—A Page of History—A few Errors in History corrected—Instructive Conversation—Fabulous Origin of Japan—Judicious Reflections—The Aïno Race.

OUR second day was to be devoted to an excursion to Lake Biwa.

This curious lake, a vast basin wherein the waters flowing from the surrounding mountains accumulate, is situated to the east of Kiôto, at a distance of two *ri* and a half. Its superabundant water runs off by one of the numerous tributaries to the great river on which we made our passage from Osaka to Foushimi, emptying itself in the part called Ouji-Gawa.

It was to Biwa, formerly, where the high aristocracy of the province used to go to take their summer quarters during the great heat of summer. The most sumptuous *yado-ya* are distributed

along its banks amid enchanting gardens and shrubberies.

At the present time, this district, through the continuous advance of European civilisation—the bugbear of the *dilettanti* of old Japan—has lost much of its poetic wildness. This excursion however, made one of the most enjoyable days of our sojourn in this country. Having started from Marouyama at daybreak, we reached there in less than an hour, over roads rudely torn up by the torrents of rain of the preceding days.

About seven o'clock, we arrived at Otsou. Otsou is not the most important part of this Lilliputian Mediterranean, but it is the most attractive. Many comfortable *yado-ya* may be found there, one of which, more particularly frequented by Europeans, has the double advantage of being very well managed and placed in a charming spot—the view from one of its external galleries embracing a panorama really enchanting. Now in the morning, the blue waters of the lake are confounded with the white mists of the horizon; on one side the view extends to an immense distance, whilst on the other, the eye, glancing over the Katada covered with flocks of birds, reposes at length on the delightful hills of Hira, with their summits capped with snow.

Just as we arrive, the fishermen are off to their work; it is the hour for miraculous draughts of a fish much esteemed. Their *founé*,* swept along

* Boats.

by a brisk wind from the north-east, are gracefully manœuvring in the distance on the dancing waves.

Yas, who is quite familiar with the locality, proposes to hire one of these light crafts. The *sendo*, he says, for a few *tempo*, will show us the lake from different points of view. The proposal is adopted with alacrity and we lose no time in running smartly our first tack.

In order that we may enjoy as much as possible the shores and the open water at the same time, we tell our boatman not to keep out too far. Yas, who has taken his seat at the bow, points out to us everything noteworthy. Here is Karasaki; we must land at this spot to see to advantage a celebrated tree. It is a pine-tree, which they say is 300 years old; its gigantic branches, propped up by stakes, cover a vast space around, and even overhang the water for several yards. This colossal specimen of the vegetable world, of venerable age, has a most imposing effect, and under its beneficent shade are grouped a number of little temples and *tcha-ya*.*

The Japanese, who have unbounded admiring regard for phenomena, stand aghast before this tree; its gigantic proportions strike their imagination—always so easily excited—with a feeling of awe. For them there is in it something supernatural that holds them in superstitious respect. Their poetic minds are constantly evoking ideas

* Tea-houses.

of the other world, and commonplace effects are sometimes referred by them to the most fantastic causes.

"It is unfortunate," Yas remarks to us, "not to have a little rain."

"Rain, indeed! Good heavens! Wherefore?"

"Ah!" continues our honest cicerone, with an impressive accent, "you would hear then . . . it is marvellous. The drops of water, in falling from branch to branch in this great tree, produce the sounds of a celestial harmony."

"Granted, but if these sounds were even sweeter than those rendered at the first rays of the rising sun by the famous statue of Memnon, if rain be necessary to hear them, we would rather do without them."

Yas appears scandalised, and is decidedly of opinion that foreigners are barbarians. In order to console himself he begins stuffing his pipe.

During this time the obliging *né-san* of the *tcha-ya* are pouring out our tea and hindering us with attentive civilities; and it is with some difficulty that we succeed in withdrawing ourselves from their politeness, now rather too familiar, in order to continue our cruise and reach the extremity of the lake, where Yas promises us something magnificent.

From Karasaki we are to go on to Séta, in order to visit in its neighbourhood the temple of Ishiyama. Séta is a bridge thrown over the lake at a point where it narrows into a river. Before getting there it would be necessary to touch at

Awatsou, from which spot there is, it is said, a remarkable view. It would be desirable also to pass the night at Seta in order to enjoy there a sunset. But among all the wonders we are obliged to choose in order to accomplish what we have already definitely planned.

A visit to Ishiyama being a part of our settled programme, we find on duly arriving there nothing remarkable ; all its merit is in its situation ; planted against a flank of the highest mountain on the borders of the lake, it commands from this eminence the country around.

Formerly, when that curious feudal civilisation flourished in Japan, the refinements of which still surprise and deeply interest us, the Japanese, artists by nature, frequently went to demand hospitality from the priests of this temple ; but the object of their excursion was not religious ; they had no vow to fulfil, their only desire was to see the lake.

During the nights of autumn, so delightfully poetic in these parts, when the pale goddess lightens the calm waves with her glaucous beams, these lovers of nature might be seen wandering hour after hour under the venerable pines, luxuriating in the perfumed breeze.

"At certain hours of the night," says Yas, "the waters of the lake change into silver waves, and strange sounds are heard"—(he is always harping on these sounds).—"It is a distant harmony, vague and undefined ; to the singing succeeds wailing, and sighs are wafted sadly over the waves ; the

spirit of Koma-ti, pensive and trembling, passes over as light as a bird ; the trees bow down before her ; the waves open and swallow the verses of the divine poetess ; then, after a loud cry of nature, darkness and a profound calm comes over all the region."

The name of Koma-ti calls up a remembrance full of melancholy ; it is one of the most popular legends of Japan ; I have often endeavoured to find some one who could relate it to me. Ouyeno has mentioned to us some circumstances in the life of this illustrious woman, of whom we find everywhere traces in the books and pictures of the country. But with these miscellaneous fragments, more or less distorted through the ignorance of the people, it is impossible to form any story that would give a true conception of the legend.

One of our companions, a professor at the French College of Yedo, well up in traditions, the knowledge of which forms nearly all the literary luggage of a large majority of the Japanese, offers to relate to us the story of Koma-ti.

"I have read it," he said, "in a Japanese book that was very common a few years ago, but which has now become quite rare. The text is elucidated by a few engravings, too realistic by far ; their simple coarseness keenly marks the various incidents in the existence of this extraordinary woman, and the diverse phases through which her abandoned corpse passed in the open fields, until the scattered bones, gathered up by a

young *bonze*, at last found the calm rest of the tomb.

"The date of the birth of Koma-ti is quite uncertain, and to avoid an anachronism I will confine myself to the expression 'formerly'—*sendatté*, used so frequently by the Japanese when they are not sure of the date of a fact.

"Formerly, then, lived in Japan—you must be contented to know that it was during the good old times of chivalry—a woman named Ono-no-Koma-ti,* whose beauty was a wonder; being the issue of a noble family, the gracefulness of her person was united with a natural refinement, and was able to fascinate with her look those even the most inaccessible to female allurements.

"A young prince, a son of the Mikado Boun-to-kou, I believe, fell desperately in love with her.

"As the laws of the empire did not permit a 'Son of the Sun' to espouse a woman beyond the pale of his family, he resolved to make her his mistress. Koma-ti, ambitious and haughty, resisted a long time; beautiful, and loaded with honours and riches, she was not long in finding herself surrounded by an actual court, who lavished praises on her personal attractions; being an artist and a poet, her *yasiki* was the rendezvous of every celebrated personage.

"At last, whether she had some prospect of being one day Empress of Japan, or whether she was conquered by the tender sentiment inspired in

* The little town of the little country.

her by the young prince, she promised to yield to his ardent love; but solicitous of putting her lover's attachment to the proof, she imposed on him as a preliminary condition that he should come during a hundred successive nights, alone and secretly, to pay his respects to her in her *yasiki*.

"The young lover, obedient to the slightest caprice of his mistress, came to the mysterious rendezvous ninety-nine times; but on the hundredth night, just as he was preparing to make his usual visit, an earthquake took place. The shocks were fearful, and the walls of his *yasiki* fell down with a terrific crash; at the same time a hurricane broke loose and poured down floods of rain and hail, accompanied with incessant flashes of lightning and deafening peals of thunder.

"The Empress-mother, alarmed for the life of her son, and fully informed, by special confidants, of the doings and tricks of the heir of the Mikado, hurried to him and entreated him with tears in her eyes not to set at defiance the anger of the gods, his ancestors.

"The young man, in a dilemma between his love and his filial affection, submitted after a little demur to his maternal objurgations.

"The following day, when he presented himself at the residence of Koma-ti, he found the door closed; the valets intimated to him that he could not be received, and handed him a letter as follows:

"'You have forfeited your word of honour; Koma-ti will see you no more.'

"The young prince, after having languished a few months, consoled himself gradually, and ended by totally forgetting, in new loves, his indomitable friend.

"Then commences the really artistic and legendary life of Koma-ti. Soon abandoned by the crowd of flatterers, the base courtiers of the young master, she accordingly finds herself alone and as neglected as she had recently been surrounded with pageantry and believed herself ardently loved; and it is but seldom, if ever, a few faithful adherents still come, and only privately, to tender the consolation of their long friendship.

"Her poems, so far light, take now a melancholy cast; her sprightly nature, carried to indulgence in spite of her pride, becomes soured and sarcastic.

"In order to find occupation for her long days of sadness, during which she secretly invokes her royal lover in fervent prayers, she writes verses beyond number, and when finished cancels them. It is thus she is represented to us in the existing coloured engravings. Leaning over a vase full of water with haggard eyes, clenched hands, and dishevelled hair, she is washing long strips of paper, on which, the moment before, she had poured out in misanthropic verse the overflowing bitterness of a wounded heart.

"In this unhappy condition, the poor Koma-ti frets away her youth, her hair becomes gray, her beauty vanishes and gives place to the wrinkles of a precocious decrepitude; life becomes a diffi-

culty, the bounty derived from a liberal prince is exhausted, and misery arrives; it is a wretchedness with all its revolting consequences; the ribaldry of the populace and the insults of the children assail her ears, who pursue her and call her *bacca*.

"At last one evening Koma-ti falls down exhausted; she has just written her last verses, that have maintained their popularity to the present day:

Hano-no-iro-wa
 Outsouri-ni kerina
 Itazourami,
 Waga mi yo-ni fouron
 Naga me sesi ma ni.*

"In spite of her destitute condition the poetess is not completely deserted, for the classic drawings of Japan represent her surrounded with the cares of two servants, who have remained faithful to her in adversity, and in the last moment they are seen deeply anxious for her and attentive to her slightest wishes.

"All is over; the proud Koma-ti has given up her great soul to the *Dairhi*.† Her two tender companions close her eyes and clothe her in a robe of white brocade, the last vestige of her former splendour. Oh, wonder! Death seems to have given back all the bloom of youth. Koma-ti, dead

* Literal translation: The flowers fade, their colours depart; uselessly, my person falls from this world whilst I look on lovingly.

† The dead Emperors who are deified.

to this world, is born to immortality, more beautiful and more adorable than in the days of her prosperity.

"They carry her dressed in this way into the midst of a field of flowers, being unwilling to commit to earth so charming a treasure.

"But the scene soon changes—and if you wish," says our friend to us by way of peroration, "we will stop here, for, in my opinion, it is better to retain the impression of a smiling picture, especially when it relates to a woman, than carry away the sad souvenir of a tableau disfigured with trivial realism. Now the author of the book of which I have just spoken on beginning this story, expatiates with a singular relish on the most harrowing details of the different periods of the decomposition of the human body, details that would be very inopportune to dwell on just before we sit down to table."

We have arrived in fact at the only *yado-ya* of the place. Yas, always attentive and provident, took due care to put into our boat the cases of our *djin-riki-cha* well filled with provisions. After the history of Koma-ti, with our appetites sharpened by the balsamic odour of the lake, it is not without much satisfaction that we see before us a nice repast, half Japanese, half European, invitingly disposed on dishes and saucers of blue porcelain.

Marcel questions our intelligent friend on many interesting details concerning Japan, its origin, its history, and its ancient manners, but it is desirable to defer to another moment, till this

evening perhaps, this intellectual feast. Time is pressing; we say a last farewell, no doubt, to this enchanting spot, and now we are on the point of resuming our way, it is midday.

The mountain of Hi-eizan, which we shall reach without halting, is situated at about four *ri* from Biwa. It is a fatiguing run for our poor "men-horses," but, stimulated by a great many cups of *saké*, taken at our expense and drunk to our health, we start again full of spirits. Two hours later they set us down at the entrance of the avenues leading to the temple of Yenrekidji, rising from the top of the mountain.

Yenrekidji was founded by the Mikado Kwan-nou a little earlier than Kiomidzou. The priests of this temple acquired, after a few centuries, considerable power, which enabled them to contend frequently and advantageously with the rival communities, jealous of the formidable prosperity of this order, and leagued together to effect its ruin.

At one time, more than a thousand *bonzes* lived within the precincts of this temple—an actual battle-ground of religious warfare. This army of priestly warriors carried their pretensions to independence so high, that in the year 1540 they had the audacity to send a challenge to the valiant Shôgun Nabounaya, celebrated for his bravery. This excess of haughtiness led to the destruction of the bonzery, and, on being vanquished, these rashly-ambitious men had to look on the cradle of their order as it was delivered to the flames and laid waste, before they were all put to the sword.

Rebuilt a few years later, the present temple cannot compare with the ancient. There is nothing in its dimensions nor in its decorations that recalls the description given in the books of the epoch. It is, however, one of the finest public buildings to be visited, and from its walls on the summit of the mountain the panorama commanded surpasses any description adequate to its magnificence.

The *bonzes* of the present time have preserved nothing of the grandeur of their predecessors, and when we think of the proud, brave soldiers who formerly trod this soil, it is with a look of pity that we greet these unfortunate mendicants with cropped heads, as they come holding out their hands for the paltry alms on which they continue so miserably to exist since the intrusion of modern ideas into Japan.

The descent of the Hi-eizan mountain, exceedingly difficult, is accomplished without accident; in less than three-quarters of an hour our *djin-riki-cha* arrive at the Goshio, and halt, covered with mud, at the doors of the Chichinden.

This second visit to the exhibition is with the intention of making our last purchases. Fatigued more by the open air than by the journey, a great part of which has been undertaken in a carriage or a boat, we hurry through the hall and galleries, desirous of reposing ourselves at the hotel and joining again our travelling companions at Marouyama, where they are to meet a few dealers in curiosities.

Meanwhile, the day is closing, and as the clock

strikes seven, we are again taking our places for the third time around the table of M. Nakamura.

After dinner, Marcel, who has a great partiality for legends, reminds our obliging comrade of his promise, which he fulfils with the most cheerful humour.

"The history of the geological formation of Japan," he remarks, "would certainly be very interesting, but this would not be, I imagine, the principal object of your curiosity. Besides, on entering into this theme, I should be drawn, perhaps, beyond the limits fixed by time, for you have need of repose and, with due regard to our excursion to-morrow, we ought not to fatigue ourselves by sitting up late.

"The fabulous history of Japan terminates about the year 666 B.C.; this date corresponds with one of the years of the thirty-fourth Chinese cycle.

"Before this epoch, twelve spirits or genii have reigned 'one hundred millions' of years over this country. Some are celestial spirits, and others terrestrial genii. The first seven are celestial spirits, of whom, even with the Japanese imagination, it is very difficult to have an intelligible idea. The first three live in space, being reproduced by the simple emanations of the chaos; the fourth is associated with a companion, but of morals still very pure, he ingenerates through the simple contemplation of his spouse; his two successors imitate the example of their ancestor; as to

the seventh, he bears a predestinated name—Iza-na-ghi, 'he who accords too much'—his spouse, since named the Eve of Japan, is called Iza-na-mi, 'she who excites too much.'

"These two names, perhaps, may enable you to anticipate what should occur. One day, Iza-na-mi, quite pensive, and subject to a certain mysterious effluence, was promenading in the fairy gardens of her ethereal palace, when her attention was suddenly arrested by the tender notes of a pair of wagtails; the little birds pecked each other amorously; it was to her a revelation.

"'There,' exclaimed the goddess, clasping her heart with both hands, 'that is true happiness.' She then went in search of her divine spouse, and on coming up to him, communicated to him her impression.

"'Wife,' the good genius replies to her, 'retire; thou art not acting thy part,' and, yielding to temptation, they submitted to the passions of mortals.

"From this union were successively created all the islands of Japan; the goddess Amaterasu-omi-Kami was so beautiful that her parents sent her to heaven to lighten and warm the worlds during the day,* whilst her sister, Tuki-no-ki, of less conspicuous beauty, became the queen of the nights.* At last, a son, the first of terrestrial genii, the fifth of whom gave birth to the cele-

* The sun.

† The moon.

brated Zin-mou, closed the era of prehistoric times, and became, according to the actual belief of the Japanese, the first Mikado of the empire.

"But this is a mere myth, and has not the merit of many legends to be based on a semblance of truth. It is, in fact, absurd not to admit the existence of human sovereigns antecedent to six centuries before the Christian era, and when this belief still prevails in presence of the very precise affirmations of the Chinese historian, Ma-tuan-lin, it seems to be inexplicable.

"Ma-tuan-lin, a learned Chinese, in an immense work entitled '*Wan-hien-tong-kao*,' a work known to Japanese scholars, devotes a special chapter to the history of Japan; he gives a list of twenty-three sovereigns, the last of whom is precisely the Emperor Zin-mou, and carries back the existence of the first to the year 1056 B.C.

"Among the last twelve sovereigns mentioned by Ma-tuan-lin, five bear names identical with those of the genii, either celestial or terrestrial, of the Japanese mythology. From this peculiarity may be deduced the certainty that this mythology was created in Japan subsequently to the compiling of the book referred to, and at a date relatively modern, perhaps that of the introduction of the religion of Buddha into the country. I do not speak of the date at which the missionaries of religion appeared, an epoch much further back than is generally supposed, but decidedly of that period when these missionaries, after having been exposed to many outrages, and suffered much per-

secution, were able to display openly, with full liberty, the ceremonies of the new worship. From this time, the sovereigns, favoured by the sycophancy of the ministers of Buddha, commenced to be honoured as the equals of the gods. And there is no doubt that the fable of the genii emanated from the imagination of these sacred courtiers, who so well knew how to accommodate the spiritual with the temporal, and to secure for themselves the protection of the rulers by placing a few of their crowned ancestors in the elastic catalogue of the inferior divinities.

"The groundwork of the fable once overturned, a question then naturally arises as to how the origin of the masters of the country may be ascertained, and from this complex question endless incidental ones arise, some more attractive than others.

"It would not be the moment now, perhaps, to launch into considerations of this kind, still if you are really so interested in this attractive country you will not be sorry to know what results, not only from the study of the Chinese books or others, but also from our observations and those of our predecessors.

"It is highly probable that the first Japanese sovereign of the series cited by Ma-tuan-lin was a Chinese prince of a dynasty overthrown and driven from the empire. This prince, accompanied by a few partisans, after having traversed the Corea, is said to have landed on the island of Kiushiu, destined to become later the residence of the first rulers of the country.

"Before the year 1056 B.C., considered the starting-point in Japanese history, the islands were inhabited by an autochthonous population, common, moreover, probably to all Eastern Asia, and whose last representatives, very few in number, named *Aïno*, still people the little island of Yezo. These natives of a particular race are really the descendants of the primitive inhabitants, who, having mixed and amalgamated with the conquering and invading race of the Chinese or Mongols, ended by forming the present race of Japanese.

"There is one thing important to observe. In the island of Kiushiu, where the conquest has, no doubt, the most thoroughly imposed its laws, the Chinese type has been more purely preserved than in the north, where the invaders penetrated later, peacefully and gradually, when the mixture of races was already fully accomplished in the south.

"Another fact helps to corroborate my opinion. This fact you have been able to observe as well as I, and you will notice it again. Among the descendants of noble families, whose members have rarely made a misalliance by contracting a marriage with the conquered race, the Chinese type has been transmitted down to the present time with singular persistence.

"It is, therefore, an indisputable fact that the Japanese have in their veins a large portion of Chinese blood.

"The existence of the *Aïno*, the last vestiges

of an aboriginal and proscribed population having survived centuries without mixing with the conquerors, is the object of a most important point of inquiry.

"In order to find a reply to this question and to arrive at a logical solution of the problem, I must admit to be very embarrassing.

"Has not the island of Yezo been selected as a place of exile at the epoch of the conquest, and have not these unfortunate people, thus cut off from society, preserved and handed down to science, through their ostracism, a rare and curious specimen of the primitive populations of the globe?

"The Japanese have never been baffled by a difficulty of this kind. They have, therefore, solved the question by appealing to the marvellous; it is an easy and expeditious method, and one that demands little effort of the imagination.

"The *Aïno*, as you well know, are, contrary to the Japanese, excessively overgrown with hair. Hair and the beard are so much in honour among them that the women embellish themselves with a false moustache by dyeing the upper lip with a blue colour, and the most pleasing compliment to address to a mother is to say to her: 'Your son is just like a bear!'

"This singular development of hair among the *Aïno* has led the Japanese to issue from their imagination this edifying legend:

"Kamouï, a prince of one of the western provinces, had the atrocious habit of committing

incest with his daughters, and one of them, the youngest, having attained the age of puberty, was intended like her sisters to be submitted to the same treatment ; but the father having remarked on the arms and chest of the unhappy child an unusual down, turned her out of doors, ordering her to quit his territory without delay.

"The unfortunate princess runs away, finds on the beach an abandoned canoe, in which a great black dog has taken shelter. The compassionate animal hospitably receives the exile, and one fine night, set afloat by the tide, the canoe drifts from the land.

"During many months the girl and the dog are buffeted about by the winds. How have they managed to live ? The authors of the legend have omitted to explain, but probably on the produce of their fishing. In short, they end by landing on a wild shore, and it was time, for the companion of the dog gives birth to twins, a son and a daughter, both covered with hair.

"The two children form a union, and become the ancestors of the *Aïno*.

"But these monstrous marriages do not seem sufficient for the Japanese imagination. Not being satisfied with assigning the origin of the *Aïno* to a dog, they marry the grandchildren of the dog and the exiled princess with bears. The partiality of the inhabitants of the island of Yezo for this animal is, it is true, some excuse to a certain extent for the eccentricity of this invention ; but it is nevertheless burlesque.

"The children of the bears become illustrious warriors, and their descendants, from the most remote times, continue at the head of the country.

"But we will drop the legend in order to return to real life. The habits of the *Aïno* are quite different from those of the Japanese. They are totally illiterate; they have a language of their own, which is understood by the Japanese just as the dialects of certain provinces of France are by the French.

"Hunting and fishing are the favourite occupations of these rustic people, and the women betake themselves to the exercise with as much zest and sometimes more skill than the men.

"Their skin is brown, but it has nothing of the yellow races. The form of the eyes and the contour of the face have much affinity with the Caucasian race.

"The manners of the *Aïno* are very mild, and they are hospitable to strangers, who on setting foot on their territory become inviolable; and the evil-doer who is so ill-disposed as to maltreat them in any way, would be severely punished. Theft, especially when perpetrated on strangers, is punished with death.

"Polygamy is permitted, and even held in high honour in the island. Adultery, nevertheless, proved by ordeal, is subject to the severest chastisement. The suspected woman is obliged to submit to the test, which generally consists in picking out pebbles from a vessel full of boiling water. If the accused scalds herself, she is, as decided by the gods, guilty,

and is then pitilessly handed over to capital punishment. If, however, she succeeds in the operation—a result that almost always happens—she is not only declared innocent, but immediately acquires a considerable prestige and authority in the country. It is she who is consulted in grave cases, and her decisions have the force of law.

“If an invalid is dying, recourse is had to her prescriptions, and she is entreated to come and restore the patient to health. If a child should be born, she is still in request to cast its nativity and consecrate it to the divinities of the sea, after having made the infant eat a morsel of raw fish.

“But this digression is assuming the proportions of a veritable lecture on anthropologic history, and I might detain you until the morning if I entered into details of every phasis of life relating to these curious people; and this is not my intention.”

CHAPTER XXI.

SOME WONDERFUL STORIES AND SIGHTS.

The Third Day's Excursion—The Daïbouts' of Kiôto—Mimizouka—Ancient Enmity between Japan and Corea—Rengeoin—The Temple of 33,033 Statues—Taïko the Great—Return to Foushimi—Yas has another Wonder in Reserve—Return to the Fold.

THE following morning at sunrise, we are taking our way in our light vehicle, but not the shortest way, to Foushimi. The brief leave accorded us does not permit us to see all the sacred and archaeological treasures of the old capital. Much remains to be seen ; but we must return to our duties.

Yas is to conduct us to two or three remarkable sanctuaries without taking us much out of the way, and we thus close too soon, but in obedience to orders, this excursion to the sacred City of the Emperors, of which we shall certainly retain a delightful remembrance.

The rain has recommenced, and our poor runners, impeded by a thick mud, make little progress. We buy them, for a few coppers, a thorough rig-out of sandals of rice-straw, and the poor fellows,

who strive with heart and soul, can thus change them as often as required to be enabled to march dryfooted over the miry roads.

After a hard drawing we arrive at the Daibouts'. This Daibouts' has not the least resemblance to that of Kamakoura. The statue of the god is of painted wood, which they fancy, oddly enough, is very remarkable. Its height is gigantic, though it does not reach fifty-eight yards, as the Japanese say. The figure of the divine personage, very coarsely sculptured, might perhaps produce an imposing effect seen from a certain distance; but the statue is placed under a kind of closed shed, and the spectator arrives at the height of the head by a rickety staircase on a platform, whose scanty dimensions do not permit him to draw back; the visitor, therefore, close under the nose of this immense figure, is unable to scan him.

The designer of this monstrosity is unknown. It was set up in accordance with the orders of the celebrated Hidé-yochi, about the end of the sixteenth century, beside a wonderful temple. This temple, overthrown many times by earthquakes and burnt by lightning, has left no vestige except its immense bell, which resisted the fire. The Cyclopean dimensions of this mass of bronze have for centuries excited the astonishment of the Japanese visitors who, on beholding it, give utterance to unceasing shouts of excited wonder.

This mass of metal is, in fact, very fine, but it is not unique of its kind. The bell in the environs of Tchi-on-in, of which Marcel took the measure,

seems quite equal to it; but the deplorable state of the sky does not enable us to be assured of it.

Not far from here stands Mimizouka, the contemporary of the Daibouts'. This mortuary monument has a curious origin, which Yas wants to narrate to us. The fact, popular in Japan, is happily known to us, and we therefore conjecture the purport of the confused explanations of our good *djin-ri' ki* without well understanding them.

The enmity of the Japanese towards the Koreans is not of recent date. Since the time of the Empress Zingou,* surnamed the Semiramis of Japan, down to the present moment, history has recorded innumerable Japanese deeds of arms in Corea. The hereditary hatred of Japan against this country is, besides, justly occasioned by the barbarous acts of these rude people, hitherto incapable of civilisation.

At the time when the illustrious Hidé-yochi was raised to the high dignity of Tycoon, a formidable expedition was organised against the ancient enemy. One hundred and fifty thousand soldiers invaded the Corean soil; sanguinary battles were fought, and the army of the Mikado, twenty

* The legend relates that this princess, the most illustrious warrior of Japan, declared war against Corea, commanded in person the expedition, and, wonderful to relate, being *enceinte* eight months and a half at the time of her departure, was able to retard her accouchement several months by carrying a stone in her girdle and thus remain at the head of her troops until the end of the war.

times victorious, soon returned loaded with *spolia opima* from his enemies—vanquished but unsubdued.

According to an old custom, a general of an army should bring to his master, as a proof of victory, the heads of his enemies fallen in the fight, and on this occasion the Commander-in-chief would in no wise fail in conforming to usage. A difficulty, however, arose. The number of dead was considerable, and they did not know how to deal with these bloody trophies, the transport of which would have required the sending of a supplementary fleet. From Corea to Japan the voyage, though not very long, was not so easily accomplished in those times ; to add to the great embarrassment it was in the month of July, and forty-eight hours of passage under a burning sun, would inevitably transform this chanel into a pestilential hot-bed ready to infect an army.

In this great dilemma, the general, a humane and considerate man, was not disposed to expose his men to such a danger, but, unwilling to renounce the proof of his victory, he showed at the same time that he was a man of resources.

Order was immediately given to cut off as delicately as possible the ears and noses of all the heads heaped up on the coast, and to pack into cases this palpable evidence of the triumph of the imperial arms.

History does not enlighten us as to what means of preservation were employed, but the intelligent chief certainly adopted some very ingenious expedient that permitted the cases to be opened before

his lord and master without fear of asphyxiating him.

These Corean ears and noses have furnished the motive for the erection of Mimizouka—"tomb of the ears." This heap of human *débris* was interred in a pit of ninety yards in circumference and eleven deep. One may form from this some idea of the number of the slain who were disfigured in this ever-memorable campaign.

Before remounting our *djin-riki-cha*, Yas persuades us to visit the temple of Rengeoin, close at hand. This temple, specially devoted to the worship of Kandjeon, is also called Sandjou-sangendo, and it contains, it is said, 33,033 statues of saints. It is difficult to conceive the amplitude of a building adequate to contain such an army of statues, were they even squeezed together like sardines in a tin; therefore there is little doubt that it is a Japanese exaggeration. We communicate our impression to the *bonze* delegated to accompany the visitors. The worthy man, scandalised by this irreverent incredulity, seems to be in a bad humour; in order, however, to confound the impious barbarians, he deigns to enter into explanation:

"Do you not see," said he in an irritated tone, "that these statues support several little ones? Well, then, before doubting the veracity of our allegations, count them, and you will find a thousand and one great statues, and thirty-three little ones on each great one."

The verification established, the account is correct :— $1,001 \times 33 = 33,033$.

“Thank you very much, sir, but we are not disposed to begin again.”

This sanctuary is very much more ancient than those we have already visited ; it dates back so far as the Mikado Gosirakawa, in the middle of the twelfth century. At a certain epoch the custom came into vogue for the skilful archers of the country to repair to Sandjou-sangendo, to practise shooting among the statues without touching one or hitting the roof.

The pillars of the temple still bear very visible traces of the feathered projectiles.

A promenade through this pantheon produces a singular effect. If we were still living under the empire of the terror of the “Swordsmen,” the presence of all these canonised heroes, whose oblique eyes look down coldly on us violating the sacred soil of their last dwelling-place, would make our hair stand on end if we were ever so brave.

The “swordsman” of glorious memory has long made room for diplomatists in black coats and silk hats ; the era of sabre gashes is closed. The visitor on contemplating these effigies feels, however, whether real or imaginary, a chilling shuddering through his whole frame ; a strong desire to see broad daylight again, hurries you involuntarily to the open air and, after all, without joking, we quit with real satisfaction this vault,

much too sacredly tenanted for infidels of our stamp.

Yas has been attentively watching for a favourable moment to relate to us a story, and he thus begins :

"Have you seen that multitude of statues?"

"Yes."

"Do you know where they come from?"

"We have not the least idea."

"Well, then, they have been cut out of a single tree that grew on the tomb of a celebrated man."

"What a fine tree!" exclaimed Marcel. "And who is this great man whose body has furnished so much prolific matter as to produce this phenomenon of nature?"

"Wakarimasen. I know nothing about him," replies our narrator. "Taïko-sama, no doubt."

Oh, grand Taïko, what an anachronism! Hidé-yochi, of whom I spoke just now, vulgarly named Taïko-sama, was born four centuries after the construction of Sandjou-sangendo; but, after all, a *djin-ri' ki* is not obliged to know his history like a pupil of the Imperial College of Yedo; besides, he is fully satisfied with the fantastic creation of the popular imagination.

But since it is a question relating to Hidé-yochi, I would do honour to the memory of the most popular man of Japan. Hidé-yochi, better known by the name of Taïko the Great, belonged to the lowest class of the people; as a simple valet of an obscure *samourai* he contrived by his genius and his courage to raise himself gradually to the

highest military dignities, and at last succeeded in getting himself elected *Shōgun* after Ota.

This extraordinary man was wonderfully gifted; his genius had no limits, and he knew how to direct war and the administration at the same time. The Richelieu of the extreme East, his principal object was to crush the feudal pride of the great houses of the daimio; in this he succeeded, defeating one after the other of these powerful feudatories in league against the central power, and thereby set up again the sceptre of the "Sons of the Rising Sun," which was on the point of falling under the rule of women. He had, as I view it, the incomparable merit to vanquish by the sole force of his great intelligence, when feudality was in the height of its power, that prejudice condemning a man of the people, whatever might be his talents, to stagnate in the inferior position where the fate of his birth had placed him.

Hidé-yochi was not only a great man, an illustrious warrior and a hero, but also a noble-hearted man. Sprung from the people, he loved the people as a father loves his children, and he worked unceasingly to procure for the lower classes a relative welfare, for which posterity will never cease to be grateful in remembrance.

Every one in Japan knows the great benefactor of the people, Sarkwandja,* the venerated Tarko-sama. There is not a child who does not utter his name with respect, and many people in their

* Hidé-yochi was frightfully ugly, and Sarkwandja signifies "man with monkey's face."

ignorance associate with it a multitude of strange incidents, more or less trustworthy, but all intended to exalt and glorify their well-beloved Tarko.

We will, therefore, unite our respects to those of a nation, and salute on passing the great spirit of the hero which haunts perhaps this spot.

After having taken luncheon in a *yado-ya*, we desired to visit a few temples on our road, but the rain has increased in intensity, and a promenade under these conditions would be a drudge. We also leave on the left the village of Oudji, renowned for its tea, and pursue our way rapidly in the direction of Foushimi, in order to dry our clothing before taking the boat from Osaka.

At Foushimi a deception awaits us. It is at five o'clock that the boat should get under weigh; it is not yet three o'clock, and for all that she is gone.

But why thus have advanced the hour of departure? Is it to play us a nasty trick? She was then full of passengers?

"No," they replied, "there were not ten travellers."

"Why then have gone before the time, and put people to inconvenience in this way?"

"She has gone because it was raining."

This was an excellent reason and quite Japanese.

"And what is the time of the next departure?"

"There is no other till to-morrow morning."

"Here we are in a nice mess. What shall we do?"

Yas, who has always some expedient, should once more get us out of the difficulty.

"Go and order your dinner," he tells us, "I am going to find you a boat."

In a moment even, Yas returns with a boatman. The hire demanded being reasonable, we strike a bargain, but in order to reach Osaka we are obliged to wait the rising tide; that will be about five in the evening.

As the "administration" of our drawers is about to become useless, we settle their account. Yas, constituted the treasurer for his colleagues, receives the agreed sum for the three days and in addition a nice gratuity and, as this was quite unexpected by any of them, they are all mad with joy and load us with endless thanks. The poor fellows are prostrating themselves, and we have some trouble to induce them to return to their work. Yas insists on remaining with the good *Danna-san* until the last moment, in order to prove in this way his deep gratitude.

We have still two hours at our disposal before the high tide. The rain continues falling: one must have a heart of stone to turn out of doors the most bemired mongrel, and, that our run of ill-luck may be complete, our *yado-ya*, extraordinary to relate, does not contain a single *né-san* to rally.

In this extremity what are we to do to kill time? To write up our notes? Marcel is going to make the attempt, for he has pulled out his memorandum-book and is now pointing his pencil. But it is barren work if one confines himself simply

to making notes, and tiresome work if he is going to revise them. Things as well as persons, to be judged impartially and soundly, require to be seen through a prism that removes them to a distance. It is rare to join in a pleasure party without some disagreeable incident, however trifling; then ill-humour supervenes and, in this unamiable mood, one is easily disposed to disparage, when later under the cheerful light of remembrance everything would appear delightful.

It is then better to defer writing; therefore, leaving my friend in his endeavour to vent his spleen over the pages of his note-book, I stretch myself on the white *tatami* of the dining-room and surrender myself to a soothing slumber.

At the moment I open my eyes, I find the cloth laid beside my improvised bed and the dinner ready. It only remains to dispose of it as quickly as possible and to embark without loss of time, in order to take the last train leaving Osaka for Kôbé.

Yas wishes us a last adieu, recommends to the *sendo* the generous foreigners, and we depart.

At eleven o'clock a violent shock makes the craft tremble, but we are only touching the quay of Osaka. Two *djin-riki-cha* are duly waiting for us, and we soon reach the station. Two hours later we are again installed in our floating home.

CHAPTER XXII.

NAGASAKI—THE CAT OF NABESHIMA.

The Inland Sea again—Nagasaki—A Dish for the Mikado of France—The Legend of the Cat of Nabeshima—Voyage to Shanghai.

THE following morning, every one having returned to his duties, we departed from Kôbé. On quitting Japan, where there is so much akin to our own country, we feel as great an oppression on the spirits as if we were leaving our native shores.

As far as Nagasaki, however, we have the separation only in perspective, but the loveliness of the scenery on the other hand will add poignancy to our subsequent regret. The passage of the inland sea is quite an enchanting dream; we are continually in sight of the coast and we occasionally pass close by the most attractive islands. Here it is a town, fancifully laid out on the top of a hill, with a mass of verdure at the foot coming to meet the blue waters of the Iwo-nada; there, a fortified

castle, a proud relic of the old Japanese feudality, thrusting its lofty head above a forest of ancient pines ; and in another spot, a rock curiously carved by the hand of time ; a temple of "the Fox," perched on the brink of a precipice, an unexpected prospect—in short, everything to arrest and fascinate the sight.

At Nagasaki we begin to think seriously of departure ; it is the last port of call in Japan, and, though being unable to foresee our future movements, we hope to return here some day.

In the navy we must wait for everything till it comes without anticipation, and take it as it presents itself without a word of complaint.

An insurmountable sadness hovers over our ship ; the sailors seem also to regret something, but their amusements and occupations are not the same as ours ; the poor fellows are not spoilt at all ; they see the land much oftener at a distance than otherwise ; their rare and short leave of absence hardly permits them to appreciate a country, and, if it were otherwise, it must be admitted that one cannot experience certain enjoyments without a little cultivation of the mind and some accomplishments, which are generally wanting in our brave seamen. And yet, at the moment of taking leave of Japan, they are all dispirited ; it is a vague kind of depression that cannot be referred to any special cause ; perhaps it is regret at bidding farewell to the blue skies and genial climate, the sweet smiles and bonny faces ; whatever it may be, its influence is painfully sensible on retiring from a

land brightened with beams of gladness and warmed with rays of poesy and love.

The stay here is to be of short duration ; no longer than is necessary to coal and take in fresh provisions. Arrived at five o'clock this morning, we have to start again to-morrow morning, and it would be hardly enough to get an idea of the capital of the island of Kiushiu if we had not already been there.

Nagasaki is one of the most picturesque cities of Japan ; its aspect on arriving from the sea is charming ; built in an amphitheatre, it rises in semicircular gradations half-way up the most enchanting hills that overhang the roadstead and close it round as completely as if it were in a basin. The streets of the city, clean like all other streets of Japanese towns, are much more animated than those of Yedo or Yokohama ; as they are narrow and paved with wood, one might fancy that he was taking a promenade through the interminable galleries of some immense caravansary. The visitor soon arrives at steep ascents, then at the steps of the temples and the *yado-ya*, renowned in the country. It is in one of these houses, much frequented, commanding a delightful panorama, that we go to pass away the remainder of the day, after having made a few purchases.

The country presents the most extraordinary animation ; the mountain roads are encumbered with people afoot ; the heights are crowned with a motley crowd, bustling and gossiping ; evidently something unusual is going on.

It is the fête of the kites. In Japan this toy is not reserved for children ; everybody flies a kite and finds endless amusement in it ; the tradesmen shut their shops, grave men shake off for a few hours their serious humour and go in parties to contend for a display of address and length of cord.

It is very curious to see all these great babies furnished with their flying toys, preceded or followed by a friend, a child, or a servant, carrying in a capacious basket a few miles of twine.

I have seen nowhere kites so ingeniously, so intelligently made ; they are remarkable for their lightness, their size, and their fanciful designs.

Amateurs, who are a little nice in these matters, attach to their apparatus a vibrating instrument, a kind of rattle, producing by the force of the breeze a stridulous sound of great power.

Under this cloud of coloured paper, the sky becomes overcast and the sunlight darkened ; it is like a flight of locusts hovering over the city, making the air resound with a confusion of grating noises.

This sport lasts several days, and we come in just at the close. To-morrow the kites will be laid up for a year ; the good people are therefore devoting the remaining few hours to the diversion with heart and soul till nightfall winds up this singular fête.

On returning to the city we are accosted by a porcelain dealer in the middle of the street.

"Come here, *Danna-san*," he says, "I have

some beautiful things to show you, and among others a superb dish; if you think it very fine, I will charge you to offer it, on my account, to the Mikado of France."

"We have no longer any Mikado," I replied. "After having tried half-a-dozen in half-a-century, we have now ended by preferring to govern ourselves by ourselves."

The man looked at me bewildered; his political education did not enable him to comprehend my words.

"I will offer, if you like, your dish to the President of the French Republic."

"No," he insisted, "to the Mikado of France."

"But there is no longer any, I tell you."

"That is not possible."

It would have been necessary to enter into too long explanations to convince this opinionative man; I therefore preferred simply thanking him and taking my leave without accepting his dish.

The following day, before noon, we weighed anchor and departed for Shanghai.

When the traveller arrives at Nagasaki by the inland sea, he passes the coast of the province of Hizen. This province, celebrated for its rich manufacture of porcelain, is equally so for the curious legend relating to its princely house.

The pilot taken at Kôbé to steer us through the inland sea, was a talkative old Japanese. Knowing him to be pretty well up in French, I begged him to relate to me the legend of Hizen.

He began most willingly, and before turning in for the night I wrote a *résumé* of his story.

One evening, during the passage from Nagasaki to Shanghai, every one had brought into the ward-room a few of his fancy acquisitions, and began commenting on the prices paid and the qualities of their bargains; in short, they were only killing time.

"Here," said one of our comrades, "this is, I think, a treasure—an old dish; I got it for a bit of bread; it is ancient Hizen, a bit of the king, or I am much mistaken."

"But it is the cat of Nabeshima!" I cried; "this figure relates quite a story, one of the most touching legends of the country; and this dish, no doubt, is a valuable morsel."

"Let us have the Legend of the Cat," they called to me from all parts; "let us have the benefit of what you have gathered in your interesting peregrinations."

I readily complied, and began relating to my idle companions the following legend, which I gathered from our pilot:

"The annals of the family of Nabeshima record that a certain prince of Hizen, the head of this family, was bewitched by a cat, whose demoniacal enchantment was near leading him to the grave. This prince had found a favourite in a girl, whose charms were irresistible, the divine O-Toyo; her enchanting powers rendered him mad with love; it was a passion ungovernable, an adoration to render jealous the saints of Buddha's paradise.

"One fine night, our turtle-doves, after having long inhaled the perfumed breezes of the park, re-entered their *yasiki*, with their hands tenderly clasped in each other's.

"Having reached the threshold of the nuptial chamber, the prince quitted his well-beloved, whispering between two kisses that he should soon return to her to repose in her society.

"O-Toyo, beaming with happiness, had hardly finished her nocturnal toilet, when an immense cat suddenly jumps in through the window and springs on her with the wildest rage. The unfortunate young girl, quite distracted, falls on her back ; she tries to call for help, but her voice dies on her lips.

"The ferocious animal keeps his victim in his sanguinary grasp ; his red eyes glare and dilate with pleasure, his double tail wags capriciously, his black hair stands erect, waves, and bristles. All at once he lays bare a throat, white and smooth. But the perfection of the creature does not arrest the infernal brute ; his cruel tooth tears the trembling flesh, blood pours forth in a stream ; the beautiful O-Toyo writhes in the convulsions of death and soon expires in the most horrible agony.

"The fiendish cat then drags the corpse of the young girl into the park and, burying it there in a corner, covers the grave with grass, and returns instantly to the chamber of the beloved favourite.

"Just as he makes his entry by the roof, the prince timely opens the door ; the cat, hearing the

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noise, instantly changes his form, and puts on the appearance of his victim.

"The lover rushes to his beloved; the girl, more tender than ever, surrenders herself to his embrace with all her heart. The prince is overjoyed, but in his transport he is seized with an inexplicable pain, and presently a terrible anguish keeps him awake till morning. The following night the same sufferings are accompanied with frightful nightmares and appalling hallucinations. When daylight reappears he has aged ten years, his hair has become quite white and his face is furrowed with deep wrinkles.

"Every one is in consternation; the most skilful doctors are consulted, the most diverse remedies are applied, but all to no purpose, for nothing seems to arrest this active malady, which no one can understand.

"The prince sinks away by degrees, and before long he will probably be laid beside his ancestors.

"The family is in utter despair, but as the sufferings come on only at night, when the invalid is alone, the fact is remarkable; he must then be constantly watched.

"With this object in view, the chief officers of the *yasiki* assemble to pass the night at the bedside of their well-beloved lord. Until midnight, everything goes on well; Nabeshima recovers a little his spirits, he converses with his faithful friends, and his suffering has abated so far; but, just at this hour, every one falls asleep at once, and the agony recommences.

"When day returns the brave chevaliers are in terror ; they vow they will relieve one another in watching, and not abandon a life so precious a single moment. But they are vain oaths, for, at midnight, the entire guard is in a deep slumber, and the prince is again a martyr to torture.

"The doctors being deemed incapable of treating the disorder, the watchers have recourse to the priests, and they call in the most saintly *bonzes* of the province to pray around the invalid's couch.

"But the prayers, like the medicines, are inefficacious. Nabeshima is at the last extremity, and they have given up all hope, when one morning the chief *bonze* on crossing the park, after having passed the night in prayer, is stopped by a young man.

"'I entreat you,' said the latter, 'to do me the honour to come and watch over my master during the night.'

"This young man, named Ho-soda, is a simple foot-soldier ; his rank, so inferior, does not admit of his entering into the apartments of his lord, but he looks so good-hearted and seems so devoted, that they think there is no reason to be so punctilious on this occasion as to refuse him this favour.

"It now being night again, Ho-soda is introduced with the usual guard. Matters go on as usual ; they talk and endeavour to interest the dying man ; then, at the first stroke of twelve the guard falls into a lethargy.

"Ho-soda has sworn to himself to resist sleep, but he feels himself seized with an uncontrollable stupor; his eyelids close in spite of his efforts: he continues struggling against slumber, but at last, the torpor becoming overpowering, he is about to yield.

"'No,' he mutters, 'I will not sleep.'

"And drawing his poignard he thrusts it into his thigh. At this moment paws are seen gliding over the *tatami*. Ho-soda, awoke by the pain of his wound, looks inquisitively and perceives O-Toyo advancing stealthily. The Prince of Hizen then begins to get agitated and to complain.

"'We will watch,' thought the courageous lad, and he plunges the blade again into the bleeding wound.

"O-Toyo has discovered the stratagem at a glance. She approaches the young warrior, compliments him on his courage, inquires about his lord, and quits the chamber. From that moment the patient becomes perfectly calm and falls into a refreshing sleep.

"'I have not been mistaken,' said Ho-soda to himself; 'it is she, it is the enchantress; but I will vanquish her power and I will save my master.'

"The next day there was a sensible improvement in the condition of the invalid. There was no doubt Ho-soda had charmed away the spell. As they were struck with astonishment before him at his supernatural power:

"'There is nothing in it,' he says, 'but what is quite natural. I have kept awake and have discovered the sorceress, whose evil genius I have paralysed.'

“‘The sorceress! What sorceress?’

“‘O-Toyo!’

“‘What! the adored mistress?’

“‘It is she herself.’

“‘Well, then, we must kill her.’

“‘I will undertake that,’ said the bold young man, and, seizing his sabre, he rushes to the apartments of the favourite.

“‘Wretch!’ he cries, ‘it is thou who hast conspired the death of thy benefactor; it is thou who hast embittered his existence by thy diabolic machinations. Thou shalt now expiate thy crime.’

“O-Toyo, finding herself unmasked, makes no attempt at resistance. Laying him under interdict, she vanishes like a shadow.

“Ho-soda, quite stupefied, calls aloud for help to hinder the sorceress from escaping from the palace. They run in from all parts and close all the apertures, and, as they are shutting the window, a great black cat bounds out and disappears on the roof.

“They search for O-Toyo in vain; no one succeeds in discovering her traces, and from that time nothing more is heard of the favourite.

“Nabeshima, relieved from the philtres and the pernicious influence of the infernal creature, soon returned to his usual health, and the faithful Ho-soda, elevated to the highest military dignities, was loaded with rewards and immense riches.

“This is the end of the legend.”

“I am delighted, my dear sir,” says the man with the dish, “to know the story of the Cat of

Nabeshima ; but I should have preferred another conclusion, one less abrupt."

"For example this one," says a wag : " They were married, lived to an old age, and had many children."

My story had the merit, at least, to amuse some and put others to sleep—a double success—and this was something on board ship during a monotonous passage.

From this day my stock of Japanese legends was much in request, and every evening I was obliged to renew the entertainment. In seven days' voyage my *répertoire* was exhausted, and I passed in review a whole army of cats, badgers, and foxes, the ordinary heroes of these stories to send one asleep.

The arrival of our pilot, who came to meet us at a good day's distance from Shanghai, put an end to this amusement.

The following morning, at eight, we were at anchor before Wo-sung, waiting for the tide. At ten we passed the bar, and at noon we moored opposite the Consulate-General of France and the "Hôtel des Messageries Maritimes."

CHAPTER XXIII.

AN UNEXPECTED VISIT.

Shanghai—The Japanese Colony—An Unexpected Visitor.
—The Grounding of the Japanese Steamer—Marcel's
Hallucinations—Dream and Reality—The Yang-tse-
kiang—Chinese Cities—Nankin—Che-foo—Return to
Japan—Arrival at Yokohama.

THIS narrative being exclusively devoted to Japan, I shall give no description of Shanghai, reserving the task of writing on China at some future date, if time and circumstances permit.

A Japanese tradesman being installed in Consulate Street, as we were informed, Marcel hastened to find him out and cultivate acquaintance with this exiled subject of the Mikado. It was quite a consolation for my friend to be able to talk of the Benten, and especially its inhabitants.

One fine morning, a few weeks after our arrival, he presented me to his new acquaintances. The family was composed of the husband, the wife, a fine *mous'ko** of eighteen months, and a cousin attached to the house.

* Baby.

This evening there happened to be a grand party of the little Japanese colony assembled at the tradesman's house, and every one seemed delighted to see us join. As for us, we were quite happy to find ourselves on such cordial and affable terms with a class of people that had proved so very attractive at Yokohama.

The *saké*, the tea, and the Lilliputian pipes circulated without interruption in this joyous company. The young ladies laughed, sang, and gambolled like children; but the men, more serious, were calculating the time necessary to realise a little capital that would permit them to live at their ease on the sacred soil of their venerated country.

An important event absorbed the conversation. The steamboat of the company, *Mitsou-Bichi*, was twenty hours behind her usual time, and no one could account for the cause.

Marcel, as well as the rest, was impatient to see the post arrive. He was in hopes of receiving a letter from O-Hana; but, since ships do not usually cross the bar of Shanghai at night, and it being now ten o'clock, he would be obliged to wait till morning.

Marcel's uneasy attitude made me think of our friends of the Benten.

"Do you know Mitani-san?" I asked one of our party.

"Yes; he is one of my correspondents," he replied. "Your comrade has already spoken to me about him and his youngest daughter, who, they say, is charming."

At this instant I heard some whispering among a group of young *mous'-mé*. They appeared to be looking at Marcel slyly, smiling to themselves; and I fancied I heard the name of O-Hana even pronounced. It was an illusion, no doubt; but, even if it had been uttered, there were so many of the name of O-Hana; it is like Marie in France; and I thought no more of the incident.

It was getting late, and already a few ladies had expressed their intention to retire. We were about to separate, when a timid knock at the street-door arrested the general attention.

"We don't expect anybody," said simultaneously the two cousins.

Then one of them, taking a lamp, went to the street-door; but, before turning the key, questioned the late-comer.

"Open it!" demanded a female voice in Japanese.

Marcel trembled visibly. The door grated on its hinges, an interview began, and then an exclamation of astonishment reached our ears.

"It is O-Hana!" Marcel whispered to me.

"What a folly!" I said to myself. But I had no time to reply, my interlocutor had disappeared.

During this interval the master of the house had gone into the room adjoining to ours with the newly-arrived visitor and, passing by the door ajar, a moment after, I heard him say to his wife:

"*O-Sayo-san, oide-nasai, ayakou oide-nasai!*"—
O-Sayo-san, come, come, quick!

Every one looked at one another astonished.

"The *Mitsou-Bichi* must have arrived," said one of the men, "for, except the Consul and his *employés*, all our countrymen of the colony of Shanghai are assembled here this evening."

The young ladies recommenced whispering. Marcel, disappointed at finding no one, re-entered the room the party occupied, at the same moment as our host.

"The *Mitsou-Bichi* is on the bar," the latter informed us, "and is waiting the tide to get over it. We shall have our letters to-morrow. I have this information from a person who, being in a hurry to come ashore, landed on the road to Wosung, and has come as far as this afoot."

The Japanese are generally reserved; with them it is a proof of good education; they therefore did not think of questioning their friend. Marcel, who was more curious and more interested to know the news, said in a piqued tone:

"What a mystery! Are you really a conspirator, Master O-Wari?"

"Perhaps," he merely replied, in the same tone.

It was quite useless to persist in inquiry, and we therefore left.

I do not know whether during this night Marcel was able to sleep. For my part, being interested in the question so far only as what *dénoûment* it might have, I did not cease to reflect on the consequences of the frolic of our giddy little friend, for I had not the slightest doubt that the hurried traveller of last evening was O-Hana.

At the hour of "up all hammocks" I always

put the same question to myself: "What is to be done?" I jumped out of bed still undecided, but on plunging my nose into cold water, I came to a resolution. I went softly to draw the curtain aside in Marcel's cabin. He was drowsy, but had not been so more than a few minutes. "Good!" I said to myself. "He is sleeping;" and I then went quickly ashore.

Ten minutes later I arrived at the shop in Consulate Street. O-Wari was himself opening the shutters.

"I want to speak to you," I said abruptly.

"And I also," he replied to me. "I was even just going to send a messenger to beg you to come here."

"Then I could not have arrived more opportunely. Besides, the reason that brings me here and that which induced you to decide on sending for me, might be very similar."

"What do you mean?"

"Speak first, if you please; I am in no hurry to explain myself."

"Oh, very well; just as you like. Do you know the person who came to me last night?"

"Yes."

"How, yes! She has told me a lie then? It was regularly planned? But then I tell you I will have nothing to do with this gad-about. I will put her at once out of doors, and wash my hands of her."

"By no means; do nothing of the kind. The poor little thing has told you no falsehood. On saying to you, 'Yes, I know who came to you,' I

have exaggerated, and I should have said, 'I suspect, I guess,' for, upon my honour, neither my friend nor I were warned of this wild freak of Mitani's daughter, and we have not, I can assure you, abetted it in any way. What has she told you?"

"What do I know about it? A lot of fine things. A passionate love for a young Frenchman; a mortal anxiety—in short, a fit of madness. My wife has made her understand the outrageousness of her conduct; she has spoken to her of the deep trouble occasioned to her father, of his reputation compromised, and of her mother's despair. She will start in two hours by the packet for Yokohama. I should have liked to accompany her, but I cannot do so at this moment. I have commended her to the care of the captain, and I will give him a letter for her old father. In the meantime, I am going to send a telegram to these good people to reassure them on the situation of their daughter. The little turtle-dove has mentioned the name of her lover; it is your friend, Monsieur Marcel. She is not to see him; it is agreed between her and ourselves; but I have promised to admit you to her. Come, she will receive you."

I knocked at the door, and O-Hana opened it.

"I expected you," she said; "and *him*?"

"*Him*, my dear girl, he is thinking of you. Yesterday evening his heart recognised you when you were still at the door; but we tried to convince him that he was mistaken. It would be imprudent to see him, it would not be reasonable, for he loves you, you little madcap, he loves you

as you merit to be loved. You are as pretty as you are crackbrained, and Master O-Wari sticks as much to the honour of his friend Mitani as to that of his own house. Your father is advised that you are in safe keeping, and that you are going to be sent back to him by the first boat. Therefore take courage, you dearly-loving little creature. When Marcel learns the truth, when he knows how much you have deferred to our good advice, he can only love you all the more; be sure of that. I can now tell you, that before two months from this day have passed away, we shall be again in Yokohama."

The young girl held her head down like a culprit in the face of a judge, and deep sighs escaped every now and then from her oppressed bosom.

"Whatever prompted you to undertake such a voyage? Were you certain of finding us here?"

"The day of your departure I sent *him* a letter by the *sendo*. He could not reply to me immediately, I well knew, but I hoped to receive a word or two from Kôbé. I knew your course. Deceived in my hope I waited, thinking you had gone on direct to Nagasaki; but at the second post I was not more fortunate. Perhaps, I said to myself, they must have steamed as far as Shanghai without calling on the way. I wrote and I calculated the time necessary to go and come, and I waited for the post from Shanghai. The first brought me nothing, nor the second. At last I lost patience, and I quickly came to a resolution. I have always had a little

store of money, for my father is very generous to me. I made a little package of my clothes, and I left. When we were out of sight of Yokohama I got frightened at my rashness. I wished them to put out a boat to send me ashore; but the sailors only laughed at me, and I did not dare speak to the captain. At last I got more reconciled to my situation. I thought of the happiness of seeing you again——”

“Both?” I asked, interrupting her.

“Yes, both. Are you not the shadow of the other? And then,” she added in a decisive tone, “I love Marcel from love, and you—I love you from friendship.”

What could I say to this? I was put back into my place.

“But in the end,” I continued, “were you sure of finding us here? Did you not suppose we were on our way to France?”

“Oh, as for that, I was well informed. After I thought you had set out for your own country, I learnt from reliable authority that you were to make a prolonged stay at Shanghai. It was mentioned in a letter to one of my friends.”

“And now, here you are well ahead; but you must turn back.”

“Yes, I return; but tell *him* this evening when I shall be far away: ‘O-Hana, thy flower of the Benten, has braved everything for thee. She has come to Shanghai, and she would have given her life to have seen thee but a moment; but they have said to her it would be the death of her

father, and God forbid that her father should die! She has therefore returned. Adieu, my friend; thou wilt be satisfied with me.' ”

I was profoundly moved. I left the poor girl, and hurried away and on board. It was hardly seven, and Marcel was still sleeping.

About eight o'clock I heard a loud and prolonged whistle. I ran up on deck. The *Mitsou-Bichi* was leaving her moorings, and five minutes later she passed alongside of us.

Passengers of every nationality encumbered the whole length of the deck. I directed my telescope amid this bustling and motley group, hoping to discover among the clusters of heads one little traveller. Not perceiving her anywhere, I was about to descend to the wardroom when some one spoke behind me.

“I am decidedly taking leave of my senses. Last evening I believed I had recognised a voice; this voice made my heart beat, and actually I experienced the same feeling on beholding a Japanese girl now leaning against the barricading in the stern of the *Mitsou-Bichi*. One would swear it was O-Hana, but on reflection it is impossible; it cannot be, for what on earth could have driven her to come here? In all my letters I have announced to her our return to Yokohama very shortly.

“What do you mean by ‘in all your letters’? You have never once written to her.”

“Not written! It is your turn now, it seems, to be crazed. Why should I not have written to her?”

Did I not promise to do so? Why should I deceive this *naïve* and tender little creature? Why should I give her unnecessary pain? She has not paid me with a letter in return, it is true, for until this moment I have not had a word even. But I don't despair; her letters will not fail to find me in the end."

I was completely mystified in this explanation. Marcel had written to her, and she had received nothing. What was the meaning of it?

O-Hana had written; Marcel had received nothing likewise—another mystery! A third party had then intercepted the correspondence on both sides.

While racking my brains over this inscrutable question, I had, by means of my telescope, discovered the apparition that had troubled Marcel so deeply. It was O-Hana, and no mistake. I continued watching her till the *Mitsou-Bichi* was concealed behind the advance of the packet of the Messageries.

Marcel seemed to be wrapped in a dream. I was quite at my ease, for at the moment of passing out of sight, O-Hana, leaning against the barricading, made a hurried gesture with her hand that revealed a breaking heart.

Adieu, charming girl, adieu! May thy loving heart one day be recompensed for so much abnegation and devoted tenderness!

Marcel, being unable to obtain any information, except through O-Wari or me, was doomed to remain in the most complete ignorance regarding

this wild freak of his mistress. The *Mitsou-Bichi* having brought over in the evening some fresh recruits to the Japanese colony, he came to the conclusion that he must have been deceived in supposing he had recognised his friend. I was therefore quite easy on this score.

The steamboat continued her route through the myriads of junks that encumbered the river of Shanghai. Her hull had already disappeared from our sight, and her large white flag with a red ball fluttering in the breeze, still indicated to the steersman of the watch her position amid a forest of masts.

The clarion had just sounded the *casquette*, the joyous call to breakfast. We were going to sit down to table when a midshipman entered the ward-room, cap in hand.

"Lieutenant, the Japanese steamer has put her flag awaft; she must have run aground on the bar."

"Well," replied our second officer, "go and inform the commander and instruct the officer as well as the midshipman on duty, to prepare to start with two boats."

Two minutes later the master's whistle called on deck the division of the watch. Two boats ready for the work were manned by hearty volunteers, and Marcel, with his sword-belt buckled on, waited the commander's orders.

It is settled, I thought to myself, seeing my friend ready to take the command of the expedition. It is he who is on duty; the die is cast, and he will see O-Hana.

"Start now, Monsieur Marcel," said the commander to the impetuous Breton; "if you do not require two boats you will send away one with the midshipman, and inform me of the proceedings. As for you, remain yonder so long as your services will be required."

They put a day's provisions into the boat, double rations of wine, the apparatus necessary to give aid to a stranded ship, and they pushed off.

The best part of the day passed without any news. Towards evening the boat headed by the midshipman returned.

"Marcel has sent me back," said the young officer to the commander; "my presence is no longer required. The *Mitsou-Bichi* is afloat again, but we were obliged to unload her partially; they are now reloading. All the passengers are ashore; they have invaded the wine-shops and native eating-houses along the road to Wo-sung. The departure is fixed for midnight when it will be high tide. There is nothing more to fear; but with all these Chinese cattle there is a nice mess. Marcel remains to keep order with his men in this new Noah's Ark."

The commander approved the conduct of his officer, in whom he had complete confidence, and there was no further question about the incident.

"Well and good," I said to myself, "the matter is clear; my diplomacy has been thoroughly successful. The turtle-doves have met. . . . *Sic fata voluere* . . . I shall be very much deceived if Marcel, in spite of his scruples, does not get out of

this adventure everything it is capable of yielding. And in the end, where is the evil? They love one another, these little lambs. It is I who am going to confess him to-morrow."

Our second boat returned about two in the morning; my friend, fatigued, no doubt, by the confidential mission he had fulfilled—and it is astonishing how so much responsibility favours sleep—did not stir at the hour of breakfast. At the moment of inspection I heard him move, and the first thing I did was to go and shake him by the hand; then kept under by a judicious reserve, fearing to seem impatient for a confidential communication, I waited. He came out of his cabin, presented himself to his commander, returned a quarter of an hour afterwards, demanded his breakfast from the steward, bolted it as he replied evasively to the questions of his comrades, and went ashore by the first Chinese *sampang** that came alongside.

In the evening the gentleman returned covered with dust, coming, he said, from having sanctified himself by a grand promenade to the establishment of the Jesuit fathers of Sike-way. Not a word about the *Mitsou-Bichi*. One could glean nothing on the subject of her stranding.

Being a little piqued at this unaccustomed silence, I feigned indifference, showed no longer any desire to speak about Japan and still less of the Benten and its people.

* A light boat covered with a straw or plank awning.

Two days after this event, we received orders to undertake an expedition in the Yang-tse-kiang.

This voyage, which would have been quite a pleasure party at any other season, promised nothing agreeable in the month of June. Our anticipations were fully realised.

It rained in torrents; the heat was suffocating; the mosquitoes were pitilessly ravenous; and sleep for a moment was out of the question. Such, in short, are the only souvenirs left me by the muddy waters of this regal river.

The mission was to reassure our countrymen, molested by the incorrigible Chinese population, and to show to their highnesses, the viceroys and mandarins high and low, a few good guns, capable of bombarding them at a respectful distance in the most approved manner, if called for.

We ascended direct as far as the vast city of Wu-shang-foo, and then we returned at our leisure, stopping a little throughout.

In spite of the rain, the mosquitoes, and every other amenity, my humour for wandering enticed me ashore at every anchorage, and every time, I returned vowing it should be the last.

The Chinese towns are foul sinks, where one breathes pestilential odours, gets bedaubed wherever he sets his foot with filth impossible to analyse, and where one is jostled every moment by a people conspicuous for their coarseness, their arrogance, their insipidity, and their uncleanness. Clean and polished Chinese are decidedly exceptions.

After having visited Wu-shang-foo, Hankow, Kiu-kiang, and N'gang-kiu, I made up my mind to see no more of these towns, when we arrived at Nan-kin. Nan-kin, being the second city of the empire, and renowned for its porcelain tower, had, however, some claim to my notice, and I could not pass by this one without a visit.

Every one shakes off his apathy and becomes stirred a little at the prospect of seeing the famous tower, so much extolled, so often described in the works of travellers who have never gone up the Yang-tse-kiang, the wonder so often multiplied on the scenic wall-papers of so many places of amusement in our own country.

After some trouble, we procure some squalid sedans, a few lean, lanky horses and guides absolutely idiotic.

"We want to see the Porcelain Tower."

"Very well. Go ahead."

After a two hours' course through streets about a yard wide, encumbered with a hideous population, we arrive somewhere. Our chair-bearers set us down, the horses stop of themselves; they have, to all appearances, made often enough the same journey.

"Where are we now?"

"At the Porcelain Tower."

In vain we opened our eyes wide and looked around on all sides; we could not see the shadow of a tower. Then, beholding our astonishment, the least blockish of our Chinese said to us in bad English:

"You didn't know it, then? The Porcelain Tower no longer exists. The Tarplings have destroyed it, and the barbarians of the West have carried away, one by one, all the bricks. You may still find, perhaps, a few bits to sell in one or two curiosity shops, but this, however, is not certain. At all events, this is the spot of the famous monument."

"We are much obliged. Now have the goodness to take us back as quickly as you can."

Twenty-five days after our departure from Shanghai we had returned to it fatigued, flurried, emaciated, soured, and peevish; desirous of quitting this inhospitable land, and one unfortunately fatal to some of our sailors, who had already suffered so much from the climate of Cochin-China and the war expedition to Tonquin.

The order for departure kept us waiting much longer than we liked, but at last a despatch arrived. Were we going to return to France, or direct to Japan to terminate there our mission, or pursue our course as far as Che-foo, where the admiral was at present? This was the all-important question that occupied our thoughts while waiting to know our destination.

Fate had reserved for us Che-foo. A violent wind rising to a hurricane, carried us along with a rapidity that narrowly escaped being fatal. The fog was so thick that our observations, necessarily imperfect, did not admit of our ascertaining exactly our position and, the land being near, our situation was critical. At last, fortunately, the

moon showed her face from behind a cloud for a few seconds, and the officer of the watch, already prepared, immediately seized the opportunity for an observation, found the altitude and decided the tack. We were out by ten miles, but this permitted our commander to shape his course in the Gulf of Pe-chi-li, and at ten o'clock we caught sight of Cape Bod looming through the fog, and to the leeward of this we had to steer to our destination.

Che-foo is a place where the European residents of Shanghai, Canton, Hong-kong, and other commercial towns go to pass a part of the hot season and to repose for a short time from the fatigues of business.

Che-foo is also a bathing-place, and they say one might almost fancy that he was transported on the beach of some of our resorts in the Channel, or the coast of Brittany, so much is there in common.

During the sojourn of a month, devoted to the exercises of the Inspection General, hunting was our principal diversion, hares being very abundant in these parts. Some evenings we assembled in one of the boats of the division, and passed our time merrily enough at cards and music. One day, the admiral, having completed his inspection, gave us a holiday.

"You will soon be recalled to France," said he to our commander; "go to Yokohama, and wait there for the order; I will transmit it by telegraph."

This news filled our hearts with joy; the invalids recovered their health, and the hypochondriacs shook off their melancholy. We were to return to France by a roundabout way, it is true, but still we were *en route*, and besides, we were to see Japan again, and this redounded considerably to the satisfaction of some of the ship.

We saw again Nagasaki, Simonoséki, where we stopped for the first time, Kôbé, where we visited the renowned cascade, and under whose waters one of our comrades had the fancy to place himself in spite of the temperature. At last, one fine morning at daybreak, we were running in the roadstead of Yokosta, and ten minutes later, after having searched for a commodious mooring amid an inextricable crowd of ships, our larboard anchor dropped noisily into the transparent waters of the roadstead of Yokohama.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AN EXCURSION IN SEARCH OF THE FUGITIVE.

O-Hana has not returned—The Parents' Distress—A Revelation—Diplomacy of Danna-san—We agree to make a Party to fetch O-Hana—Departure for Fousi-yama—A Droll Story of a Fox.

INSTEAD of sharing in my comrades' joy, I felt my heart throbbing with anxiety. I regretted not having spoken to Marcel on O-Hana's adventure and consulted with him on what course to follow, and I was also impatient to learn the *dénouement* of this little idyll.

Marcel being on duty, I was obliged to go ashore alone.

"I shall come this evening," he called to me just as the long-boat pushed off; "tell her that."

"Yes, I shall not forget; be easy on that score."

I soon reached Mitani's house. I was oppressed with a harrowing presentiment and, on entering, I felt a cold shudder over my whole

body. Mitani, squatting before the *tchibatchi*, seemed to be living in another world. He looked ten years older. The noise of my footsteps roused him from his brooding. He got up and came hurriedly towards me.

"O-Hana?" I said inquiringly, without entering into any matter.

"O-Hana?" he repeated in the same tone of inquiry.

"What! You do not know where she is?"

"No."

"And you have received no telegram from Shanghai?"

"Oh, yes; but, no doubt, they wanted to deceive me. I have not seen my child, and I shall see her no more whether she is still alive or whether she has ceased to exist. Because I—you see—I am struck here," and he laid his hand on his heart. "It will serve me for a few days longer, perhaps, and the mother will follow me very shortly."

I was bewildered and frightened.

"It is not possible, father Mitani. You are mad. O-Hana has returned—she arrived at Shanghai one evening——"

"Ah! you have all cruelly deceived me—she, you, he——"

"I swear to you solemnly that Marcel and I are innocent. As to the poor little thing, she did not know how to overcome her trouble. She never reflected on the consequences of her freak. She has set off like a dove to join its mate by instinct,

without reflection. She has yielded to her heart. Marcel is ignorant of it all. O-Wari and I alone are in the secret. She arrived at eleven o'clock at night at Shanghai, worn out and confused with her rash step. But one word was enough to bring her to her senses."

"'It will be the death of thy father,' O-Wari said to her. 'Oh, my poor, good father!' she replied, 'what grief I must have caused him! You are quite right, I shall return by the first steamer.' And the next day, at eight in the morning, she had set out. She has returned, be sure of that. She is here hiding herself, because she fears your anger, but we will find her and bring her back to you."

The old man was quite changed; these words of hope were balm to his wound.

"Yes," he replied to me, "I have confidence in you. You will find her again, my O-Hana."

The mother had come in unobserved behind us. The sight of this excellent woman excited my compassion; she was always so retiring in the house, so disposed to keep herself in the background, so modest and forbearing that she never ventured to utter the slightest complaint. On now hearing what I had just said she wept for joy.

There was no time to lose. It was necessary to extricate my ideas from their confusion and decide on some plan of conduct. The first thing to do was to go and enlighten Marcel. He could not seriously have any ill-feeling against me on a

suspicion of an attempt to mislead him. It was in his interest ; in the interest too of his thoughtless mistress. Besides, he ought to know something of the matter and what should be done since the grounding of the *Mitsou-Bichi*. I returned at once to the ship.

"What!" cried the young Breton on my first words of explanation, "she has not come home?"

"Ah! it seems that reticence is no longer a harbour of refuge?"

"You know something, then, since you are prepared with your good counsel?"

"As much or as little as you wish."

"Oh, very well, then swear to keep my secret."

"You may rely on my silence in confiding anything to me."

"At the time of the accident to the *Mitsou-Bichi*, if I remained ashore till two o'clock in the morning . . ."

"Ah! Yes." The vision had changed into reality.

"You know nothing whatever—I will tell you all; but, for God's sake, you must know nothing."

"You tire me out with your precautions. I will ignore as much as you desire. I shall believe even that you have sheered off from anchors the whole day and half of the night . . ."

"Nonsense! But where is she now? Quick, there is no time to lose. We must look for her."

And, totally forgetting that he was on duty, the thoughtless young fellow was preparing himself to follow up his words.

"At last we are becoming more practical ; we can talk more soberly now. If you will trust me, do not worry yourself ; attend to your duties. Before this evening I shall be on the traces of the fugitive. To-morrow I shall have arranged something, and then we will consult together."

At eleven o'clock I was in the country. Ouyeno must know something of the mystery, I thought, and in any case he will help me materially in my inquiries. I went directly to the residence of the Customs' officer. O-Sada was alone.

"I knew you had arrived," said the young wife, "and fully expected you. Ouyeno will be back presently."

"Are you fully acquainted with the situation of your sister?" I asked.

"Yes. My husband, for a long time past, has discovered the projects of O-Hana. He had very cleverly intercepted the correspondence of the lovers in the hope of making them forget one another. At present he has some certain information on the direction she has taken on her return from Shanghai. He did not wish to rouse any misplaced joy in our parents before being quite certain ; but he has just gone to reassure them. Oh, here he is ; he will tell you more about it than I can."

Ouyeno's eyes were beaming with a self-satisfied smile. He was evidently pleased with himself.

"I am quite worthy to be a prefect of police," he began on entering. "I have discovered the

retreat of the fugitive. We must go after her and bring her back to her disconsolate family."

"Where is she, my dear Ouyeno? Speak, and ease my mind."

"Ah, ah! Monsieur le Français, this is the way you carry off our girls, and turn them from the straight path——"

I was indignant, and on the point of protesting against the imputation, when he continued :

"I know, I know ; it is merely a joke. The good man, Mitani, was not at all satisfied. He spoke of nothing less than of assassinating your friend on his return, blowing out your brains, and then ripping up his body at last like a true, like a pure Japanese."

"Diable !"

"I calmed his mind at the moment as well as I could, without telling him all the truth.

"I desired, in case you should not return here, to extenuate as much as possible O-Hana's folly by throwing the responsibility on her seducer. But as you are come back, I have changed my tactics. I have just been reading to my father-in-law Marcel-san's letters. I have received the whole of them. They are the letters of a good and upright young man. He never thought of deceiving an innocent girl. As for the prose of O-Hana, I keep it there under key. The dear sister-in-law has a tender heart and a ready wit. It is dead and buried ; papa father-in-law will not read it."

"But where is she? This is the question now."

"Far from here, at Hakoné, with the parents

of that girl who was instrumental in furnishing her with information regarding your presence at Shanghai. It is this girl who has enabled me to learn everything contrary to her intention. I pretended what was false and I have learnt what is true. On the day I heard of her arrival at Yokohama, I swore I would find out her retreat, and you see I have succeeded. But it is for you alone to lead her back to the paternal fold; she will listen to no other than you. I have sufficient confidence in Marcel-san to permit him to accompany you. To-morrow you shall have further information from me and every indication desirable that you may not go astray. You can leave afterwards as soon as you like."

Marcel, having been fully informed, wanted to hire the *djin-riki-cha* the same evening and set out the next morning; but it was necessary to remember the duties of the service, and, as for myself, I could not be at liberty before the end of the week.

The departure was therefore fixed for Saturday morning. Mitani, now informed of our projects, reassured, besides, on the position of his daughter, and convinced of her innocence as well as of the good faith of Marcel, took a more cheerful view of existence, and showed it very visibly in his countenance.

"If I dared," said he to us, "I would accompany you that I might embrace my dear daughter all the sooner. Her old father forgives her, and will not say a word about her trouble. But let her

return quickly, and bring back to us joy, life, and soul, that quitted the house with her."

I particularly desired to be accompanied by Ouyeno in this journey. He would serve us as a guide and interpreter, and besides, with regard to O-Hana, it was more becoming to have him with us. Mitani, without suggesting it, fearing to wound our susceptibilities, shared my advice.

"Come with us," I said to the Custom-house officer, "and let your wife accompany you ; it will be quite a pleasure party for her, for you, and for us, and your father-in-law will be delighted. O-Hana, besides, will be happy to see her sister coming for her, and O-Sada-san is longing for the trip. O-Hana having been found again and everything pleasantly settled, there will be nothing to hinder us from continuing our excursion and availing ourselves of the opportunity to make the ascent of Fousi-yama ; it will be charming. Come now, my dear Ouyeno, reflect a moment, say yes and ask for a few days' leave from your administration."

The *employé*, convinced by my reasoning and moved by the entreaties of his wife, yielded to our wishes, and it was arranged that we should set out two days afterwards, Saturday morning. Five *djin-riki-cha* with ten drawers were engaged. The boxes of our little carriage were stuffed with European provisions. We took a little store of linen, shoes for changing, rugs for protection against the cold and rain, if needed, and, when

five o'clock, the hour fixed, struck at the town clock, we all started.

Never had we made an excursion at a time more propitious. The autumn was in its full glory. October, the month of russet leaves and golden stalks—the month of cold nights, foggy mornings, and mild days—had hardly yet begun.

And in order not to tire out our *djin-ri' ki*, and to enjoy with perfect tranquillity the beautiful and poetic nature of the season, we decided on moving at our leisure, for a long leave gave us the desired liberty.

We had traversed the suburbs of Yokohama, and passed Tot-souka before daybreak.

When the first huts of Fouzi-sawa come in view a pale yellow line marks the horizon, and the advent of day gives its first sign. This is our first station, and our *djin-ri' ki* having halted at the door of a pretty *tcha-ya*, knock vigorously at the shutters still closed; women's voices respond to their appeal; the panels soon glide along their grooves, and a bevy of girls, not yet fully awake, deliberately adjusting their disordered hair and night toilettes, come politely forward to salute the early travellers.

The *f'ton* are strewn over the floor, and an indescribable confusion reigns over the front room. A determined sleeper is stretching himself and yawning in some corner or other. In a few seconds, however, everything is in order and quite clean, and the tea ready.

Five or six cups of the perfumed infusion and

half-a-dozen *kachi* constitute the first breakfast of O-Sada, whilst Ouyeno, preferring something more substantial, shares with us the remains of a chicken, and drinks a bumper of *boudo-chu*.

The sun makes his appearance as we mount our *djin-riki-cha*, but the cold is very sensible, and the sharp, pure air forces us to wrap ourselves in our mantles.

The road being wide enough, we proceed two abreast. I take the lead with Ouyeno, Marcel follows beside O-Sada, and our fifth *djin-riki-cha*, charged with wraps and provisions, brings up the rear.

From Yokohama to Odawara the road winds along the sea-shore. It is impossible to see anything more curiously and characteristically Japanese and more animated. Sometimes like the "grande rue" of an interminable village, this road runs between two rows of pretty little houses, sometimes curves under the fresh shade of a forest of maritime pines, turns sharply at the angle of a projecting rock, or approaches the beach, distributing its pebbles at the edge of the clear waters of the bay of Odawara.

It is here that one must see a real bit of Japan, it is here that it should be taken in its living actuality, in all its attractive, fanciful picturesqueness. We pass at every moment groups of lively wayfarers, women in short skirts, pilgrims of both sexes with a staff in their hand and a bag over their shoulders; the men are loaded with baggage; the women trot along in their sandals with a wayward mien; the young girls are smiling and

skipping about like lambs ; and the young mothers are carrying their babies on their backs warmly swaddled and secured by the pelisse attached to the girdle.

Here, a labourer is occupied in cultivating his field, and there, a young girl half-naked, sporting in the limpid waters of a cascade among trout and gold-fish ; in another spot, a loving couple in a tender embrace, an angler seriously at work with rod and line, with his grave countenance almost hidden beneath an enormous straw hat ; further on, quite a caravan of horses shod with straw shoes, a *norimono* mysteriously closed : it is a motley procession, a singular admixture of the most diverse, picturesque elements, full of movement and life, whose aspect varies at every moment and whose innumerable scenes would furnish admirable subjects for the artist's pencil.

Our vehicle drawers are full of ardour ; it is quite a pleasure to see them springing with so much elasticity on their heels ; they move as if they were on steel or india-rubber. We pass Nango, and then successively the ferry over the river Banu, the bridge over the Hirat-souka, and at last we arrive at O-Iso at noon, after a seven hours' march.

It was part of Ouyeno's plan to luncheon in this village quite at our ease, taking full time to admit of our drawers resting themselves, and of deferring our arrival at Odawara till the evening.

While O-Sada, like a good housewife, is superintending the preparation of our repast, Ouyeno

walks with us into the gardens of the house. Marcel has been very gloomy, and we could not get a word from him, but in order to stir him up a little, I entered immediately into a subject that interested him.

"You have given me a few particulars," I said to our Japanese friend, "about your doings to enable you to discover your sister-in-law's hiding-place, and about the place where she is staying."

"I told you that O-Hana is in retreat at Hakoné with the parents of one of her friends; this friend lives with an old aunt at Yokohama. I have questioned her very cunningly, feigning to know everything. The young lady, believing me to be better informed, told me exactly what took place.

"O-Hana on landing, on her return from Shanghai, dreading to go back to her father, went to her friend's. It was a great anxiety for the aunt and a great embarrassment to everybody; but, after two or three days of uncertainty, it was necessary to adopt some decided course, and this is what they settled:

"O-Hana was to go to Hakoné, the Shobé family receiving her as a relative and to treat her as such in the meantime, till a favourable opportunity presented itself for returning to the paternal roof."

"But what do they say about it," I asked Ouyeno, "in her father's district? What do busybodies say about the disappearance of his daughter?"

"Nothing whatever. In Japan no one troubles his head, as they do in your country, about his neighbour's doings. The young girl is absent—very well, she is on a journey. If any one spreads any disparaging reports, wise people hold their tongues. The situation, besides, thus far, presents nothing irregular. As to silly people, it is very easy to throw dust in their eyes by some story of a fox."

"Well, no one any longer believes in such stories. Have you not said as much?"

"That is true; and yet many people pretend to believe in them, in order to turn them to their own account in case of need, and others are still wandering in the crooked ways of error from a kind of superstitious fear. In short, with an excited imagination, one is ready to swallow the most extraordinary things, and sometimes incredulous and strong-minded people are the first to be bamboozled. I will relate to you a good story on this subject. But O-Sada is calling us now to our luncheon, and, if agreeable to you, we will defer the story to the dessert."

The repast was delightful. Ouyeno's calmness and O-Sada's good-humour reassured us as to the issue of the mad freak of our dear little friend. We enjoyed ourselves heartily and without the slightest reserve. The promised story put us all in high spirits.

"I spoke to you one day of the fox, when O-Hana was having prayers recited by a *bonze*. I have mentioned to you one or two of his tricks,

but one of the most curious known is that which he played on the carpenter Tokoutaro.*

"Tokoutaro was, like me, an unbeliever. One evening, about ten o'clock, during winter, after a good and hearty dinner, with many guests sitting around the *tchibatchi* smoking and taking tea, the conversation turned on foxes and their magic power. Every one related a farce, more or less droll, of the cunning arch-fellow.

"When Tokoutaro's turn came he got up and, addressing the company :

"'You are all here,' said he, 'a lot of fools or ignoramuses. One must have lost his senses, or be more grossly ignorant than a *bonze* to believe in such trash. As for me, I laugh at foxes, and I defy all those that haunt the forests or wastes of our fine country to play a trick on Tokoutaro.'

"They began to laugh and then argue; in short, they all agreed that Tokoutaro deserved a lesson for his presumption and boasting.

"'Since you are so sure of yourself,' said to him Iokoudji-san, the master of the house, 'I will lay you a wager—yes, I will bet you a thousand *tempo* that you will not traverse, at this hour, the moor of the Maki without being bewitched by one of its inhabitants.'

"'Very good, very good!' replied the guests.

* Not being able to note down immediately the story of Tokoutaro, I have, no doubt, omitted some details and bungled over some proper names. I hope those who know the classic text of this tale will excuse me.

'He will not hold to the bet; he will be afraid at the last moment. Tokoutaro is a humbug.'

"Our carpenter, piqued in his self-esteem as a free-thinker, and excited by copious libations, accepted the wager.

"'Done!' said he boldly. 'I accept it. Father Iokoudji, get your *tempo* ready. I start, and all of you wait for me here. In three hours I shall be back, bringing, as a proof of my good faith, the spectacles of old Mago-bei, the magistrate of Horikané, whose house is situated on the other side of the moor of the Maki.'

"Having said this he started.

"They expatiated some time on the intrepidity of the carpenter, smoked many pipes and drank countless cups of tea. The hour fixed for his return struck, then the next, and Tokoutaro had not returned. At last, at three in the morning, every one tired out with waiting, went to bed.

"Tokoutaro had lost the *tempo*, but he was probably disposed to chuckle over it in his bed at the expense of his companions, so simple as to undertake to wait for him. It was an account to settle with the wag; but they would wait till the morning, and thereupon agreed on a rendezvous in number at eight in the morning at the carpenter's house.

"One of the youngest of the party, a barber by trade, a good, jolly lad, who, whilst sharing the carpenter's opinion, had rallied him on his presumptuous courage and inopportune declaration of faith, having remarked the pot-valiant state of the

Hector and fearing an accident, set out in search of him without warning his companions.

"During this time Tokoutaro, in perfect good faith, was trying to win his bet. His march, it is true, was affected a little by his having had a drop too much and the consequent sharp air of the night, but he had resolutely entered on the famous moorland, and found himself half-way when twelve o'clock struck.

"Just at this moment a pretty little fox bounded before him in the narrow pathway, and suddenly disappeared in a thicket of bamboo.

"Look out! If I should be caught, now is the moment. We will be on our guard.'

"Hardly had he made this reflection than the noise of a female footstep was heard. He soon recognised, in fact, a human form, and was not long in coming up to a young girl.

"Good evening, Tokoutaro.'

"Good evening . . .' Then looking at the wayfarer by the moonlight: 'What! It is you, O-Taka-san! What are you doing on the moorland alone at such an hour?'

"I have just been married at the village of the Maki with the young Guenta.'

"Oh! oh! And where are you going thus, without your husband at this hour of the night?'

"I am going home to my father; but I am very much afraid. You would be very obliging if you accompanied me.'

"I will do it all the more willingly because

I wish to speak to your father. I want his spectacles.'

"The young girl did not appear to be astonished at the object of the nocturnal march undertaken by Tokoutaro, and the wayfarers went their road with a light step. The carpenter knew the daughter of Mago-bei, it was certainly she to all appearances, but he could hardly believe she was there in flesh and bone.

"'This is my fox I saw just now,' said he to himself, 'and he won't get over me. I shall see the tip of his tail and no mistake.'

"Talking all the time, they had arrived at the magistrate's house. They knocked at the door; Mago-bei came to open it, uttered a cry of surprise on seeing his daughter, whom he believed to be in the arms of her happy spouse, and called his wife. The latter ran in out of breath, barely half-clad, and as she threw her arms round her child's neck and was asking her endless questions:

"'Stop,' cried Tokoutaro, 'it is not your daughter at all, but, indeed, a nasty fox. He wanted to play a trick on me, and now he is laughing at you.'

"The daughter cried out loudly.

"'Go about your business,' said the mother, 'it is my child. You are quite muddled, that is certain.'

"But Tokoutaro insisting, said to the parents:

"'Only leave me alone a few moments with this sorceress, and I promise you I will soon put an end to her witchcraft.'

"Deceived by his earnestness they at last yielded to his persistence. Tokoutaro, then seizing the unfortunate creature, threw her down, trampled her under foot, and said to her brutally :

" 'Thou hast reckoned, perfidious animal, on playing me a trick, but thou art caught in thine own trap. I hold thee in my power ; thou shalt not escape from me, and I will force thee to assume again thy true shape.'

"The poor girl so ill-treated, uttered piercing shrieks. Tokoutaro, terrible in his vengeance, would listen to nothing.

" 'Confess,' he cried ; 'confess, wicked fox, and I will spare thy life.'

"The victim made no avowal, and called her mother. The ungovernable carpenter, making it a point to win his *tempo*, was determined to carry out his proceeding to the bitter end.

" 'Thou wilt not resume thy true shape ? Very well ; I am going to force thee to do so,' said he. 'I am going to prove to thee that thou hast a fawn-coloured coat, and a red bushy tail——'

"Saying this he tore off the clothing of the unhappy creature stupefied by terror, and exposing the most beautiful virgin form that can be imagined, he saw that there was not a shadow of a hairy coat, nor of a red tail, nothing, in fact, extraordinary, nothing but a white bosom, and the most graceful and adorable human form.

"It was more than enough to disarm the most terrible torturers of the Inquisition. Tokoutaro,

however, would not be convinced, and was determined to carry out the trial to the end.

“ ‘ We shall see,’ he bawled out in a paroxysm of rage, ‘ if you will be able to resist the torment of witches.’

“ And he threw his victim on a heap of bamboo faggots, which he had just set on fire.

“ The young girl uttered the most heart-rending shrieks, and at last expired.

“ Then calling the parents, the assassin said to them :

“ ‘ Look, there is that brute of a fox ! I have just killed him ; but he will persist in his ridiculous course, even after his death, in preserving the appearance of your daughter. Get rid of this nasty brute, and thank me.’

“ The mother seeing her daughter dead, threw herself on her remains blackened by the flames, moaning most lamentably. Mago-bet mingled his bewailing with his wife’s, and loudly accused Tokoutaro of having assassinated his child.

“ The servants and neighbours, awoke by the noise, came running in, and demanded what was the matter. Tokoutaro had brutally assassinated the beautiful O-Taka.

“ ‘ Seize that monster ! ’ the father cried ; ‘ bind him and hand him over to justice, that he may suffer the just punishment of his crime.’

“ Tokoutaro related the doings of the fox, and protested that he was innocent. No one would believe him. ‘ Death to the assassin ! ’ they loudly cried.

"The unhappy wretch writhed in his despair and asked for mercy. At this moment happened to pass an old and holy *bonze*, the principal of a neighbouring bonzery, going home from a nocturnal round.

"On learning the calamity to the honest Mago-bei, he went into the house to offer his consolations to the afflicted parents. The cries and supplications of Tokoutaro moved him, and as a minister of mercy he demanded for him a commutation of punishment. 'The assassin,' said he, 'shall not be delivered to the executioner, but on one express condition :

" 'Thou shalt renounce the world, and thou shalt enter into the holy brotherhood of which I am the head, in order to pray during thy lifetime for thy victim.'

"These words calmed their excited minds, and the priest's wishes were deferred to. The carpenter promised everything that was required to save his head, and submitted it at once to the operation of the razor, which the old *bonze* performed with rapidity and dexterity.

"During the operation the patient fainted. For some moments he lost all sense of existence, but a feeling of cold on the head recalled him to life.

"Tokoutaro opened his eyes. Every one had disappeared, the scene had totally changed.

" 'Where am I ?' cried the new *bonze*. 'What, lying in a field of bamboo ? I must have had a bad dream. By my faith ! all the better ; but

then I have lost a thousand *tempo*. I remember now, before three o'clock I was to have taken the spectacles of Mago-bet to my friends. I am not a *bonze*. It is daylight; we will go in as quickly as possible.'

"Whilst thus recovering from his intoxication he passed his hand leisurely over his head.

"'Oh, what is this? No hair!' he exclaimed; 'as bare as my knee! It was, then, no dream. Tokoutaro has lost his head! Shaven,' he said, 'shaven bare, like a beggar; and by whom? Ah me! by that cursed fox of last night. Ah! those rascals of foxes! Then your supernatural power still really exists, it seems.'

"Talking in this way to himself, he had arrived near his house. It was eight o'clock in the morning, and all his companions were coming up the next street when he opened his door.

"A loud burst of laughter greeted him.

"'Tokoutaro has fallen in with the barber fox,' said the merry band of comrades. 'Tokoutaro, the boaster, has lost a thousand *tempo*. Do you believe now, simpleton, in the power of the foxes? Silly babbler, will you believe at last what everybody believes?'

"'Alas!' replied the unlucky man, 'I will believe everything you wish. I am, indeed, forced to do so. I have lost my bet, and I will pay up to-day; but spare me your sarcasms.'

"'Well, Tokoutaro,' said an unknown voice, 'the foxes forgive thee.'

"Every one, turning round astonished, looked

for the author of these words; but no one had spoken. Every one wanted to question Tokoutaro on the incidents of the past night.

"During this time the young barber, taking advantage of the confusion and the general curiosity manifested, made his escape quietly, ran to Iokoudji's shop, came out again after having deposited a packet carefully tied up, and returned to the mystified companions without any one having noticed his absence.

"The wonderful adventure of the carpenter had plunged his auditory into bewilderment; the most indifferent, the least simple, declared themselves to be thoroughly converted.

"I will remit thee the thousand *tempo*,' generously said Iokoudji to his unlucky adversary, 'the bad trick of the foxes is quite a sufficient punishment for thy bragging.'

'No,' insisted the latter, 'I have lost, and I will pay. Go, all of you,' he said to his friends, 'accompany Iokoudji to his house and wait for me, I will be there. I will fulfil my engagement, you shall see that.'

"They made no objection to this, and left.

"Tokoutaro took from his little bag of savings the thousand *tempo* he had lost—a serious breach in the precious hoard—dressed himself up a little, covered his head with a hood, and set out for the residence of his creditor, where he arrived soon after his comrades. The shop was quite in an uproar with the loud talking and laughing. Iokoudji on entering had perceived lying beside the *tchi-*

batchi a packet addressed to him thus: 'To Iokoudji-san, from the barber fox.'

"They had opened the mysterious packet, but not without some hesitation and superstitious fear. It contained the thousand *tempo*.

"'Hey!' cried Iokoudji to Tokoutaro as soon as he saw him, 'thou mayest flatter thyself to have fallen on a very good fellow of a fox. He has taken thy hair, but he would not touch thy purse. See, here is the amount of thy bet! It is the fox's money; but I believe it to be quite good. I will keep it; put thine own again in thy pocket.'

"You may suppose," added Ouyeno, "that this adventure made much stir. All the inhabitants of the village except one—you have guessed him—became faithful believers in the virtue of the foxes, and they made a hero of the barber fox of the moorland of the Maki, who will perhaps long preserve a reputation—and one well merited, is it not?"

"Do you not believe, my dear Ouyeno, that this credulity is a peculiarity of your countrymen?" said Marcel to the free-thinker. "Here you believe in the virtue of foxes; in France we do not doubt that of the devil—a propensity that permits clever rogues, with a little manœuvring, to fatten on the public folly, and to draw from it sometimes a nice revenue."

"I have related to you this story," continued the *employé*, "to prove to you that, in case of need, one might explain the temporary disappearance of O-Hana by laying everything on the foxes' back.

And now we will get into our vehicles. It is three o'clock, and we shall arrive at Odawara without hurrying ourselves before night."

After having passed Moumezawa, Konotsi, and many pretty villages, we arrived at the ferry of the river Odawara at half-past five, and at six, we were installed in the *yado-ya* where we were to pass the night.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE EXCURSION CONTINUED.

In *Kango*—The Lake of Hakoné—Scotch Hospitality—An Agreeable Travelling Companion—The Story of Kosan and Kingoro—The Crater of Fousi-yama—Return to Hakoné.

BEYOND Odawara the road is too hilly to travel in a *djin-riki-cha*; we are therefore obliged to change this commodious vehicle for the detestable *kango*. We retain, however, one *djin-riki-cha* to carry a part of our provisions, and to resort to in case of great need.

We set out early. O-Sada takes her place in a *kango*. As for Marcel and myself, we prefer walking infinitely to subjecting our limbs to a bending and twisting, Europeans are unaccustomed to; a few minutes' experience was sufficient to induce us to relieve ourselves from the torture.

But Ouyeno could accommodate himself very readily to this equipage, with which, no doubt, he is familiar, though on this occasion he prefers going afoot. Our *kango* therefore proceeds lightly

enough, charged merely with a few things, including a dozen or two of wine and some coffee.

We intended at first to call at Hakoné on our way and rest there half a day, in order to see O-Hana and take her with us as far as the crater of Fousi-yama; but, on due deliberation, we thought it judicious not to introduce ourselves to the fugitive on going, but to defer till the return journey the exciting scene of an unexpected meeting.

Hakoné is about six hours' march from Odawara. The route lies along the valley of the Aya nearly the whole way; it is the Tôkaidô in its most hilly and picturesque part.

The valley of the Aya is quite a fairyland from one end to the other; murmuring cascades, roaring waterfalls, rugged rocks singularly cut out, gigantic trees, varieties of temples of all dimensions, mysterious-looking little nooks, springs and babbling brooks abounding, and the whole presenting to the wondering eye of the traveller an endless change of scenery which makes this part of the journey seem very short; it is one he quits with regret.

Having left Odawara at five in the morning we pass Hata at about eight, when we rest a little, and at a quarter to eleven we reach the banks of Lake Hakoné, after having traversed a part of the old town.

This lake is much inferior in size to Lake Biwa, but larger than Lake Tchouzenji. Less hemmed in by the mountains, its waters seem bluer and less

cold ; its shores, abounding in villas and luxurious *yado-ya*, are really enchanting.

Like all Japanese lakes, it attracts, during the hot months of summer, numerous bathers. Its society is more select and yet more numerous than that of other bathing-places ; the high aristocracy prefer it as a rendezvous and, for some years past, Europeans from Yedo and Yokohama have been flocking to this charming spot.

We trust our persons and our fortunes to frail boats and, favoured by a brisk wind that well fills our red-coloured sails, we reach, in less than twenty minutes, the opposite shore.

Noon soon comes round. It is the hour for the grand halt. A pretty *tcha-ya* is quickly found near the landing-place and, being indisposed to proceed further, we get our provisions out of the *kango*, and appreciate them with an appetite well sharpened by the march ; we have two hours' sleep on the *tatami* and then start again.

From this moment the ascent is very sensibly felt. To proceed from Hakoné to the plain of rushes it is necessary to cross a chain of steep mountains ; here the *djin-riki-cha* become quite impracticable, and the boldest of our drawers is obliged to halt, patiently waiting our return.

The ascent is very arduous for an hour, and under a burning sun this promenade would be anything but a pleasure party. But every sacrifice merits a reward, and on arriving at the first plateau one is struck with admiration before a panorama of which no description can give an

adequate idea. On one side is Hakoné, reflecting its ancient walls on the placid waters of its lake ; then the immense plain of rushes stretching its undulations till lost in the hazy distance ; and, still further, the old Fousi, the sacred mountain, lifting its bare and barren summit proudly in the clouds.

This magnificent scene holds us in ecstasy for some minutes. But to-day I suspect Master Ouyeno has not well calculated the distances, and we shall not find it easy to reach before night a suitable shelter.

The road becoming practicable again, we are forced to resign ourselves to perch in our *kango*, in order to get over the ground as expeditiously as possible. Ouyeno has given us a lesson on the best method of installing ourselves in the bottom of this cage ; the position is irregular but supportable, and we must submit to it with a good heart ; besides, on setting our feet on the ground every now and then, to hinder the "tingling" from rising too high, we find in the long run this kind of locomotion, if not agreeable, at least tolerable for want of a better one.

Our sinewy porters advance rapidly ; they pass the highest point of the mountain about five, and trot down the descent pretty briskly, at the base of which stretches away the plain of rushes.

Ouyeno intended that we should sleep at Yotembo ; but, as it has been a fatiguing day for everybody, it would be imprudent to wear ourselves out ; therefore, on arriving at the little village of Inashi, we all prefer passing the night there to

going three miles further in order to reach Yotembo.

Inashi, a little village of hardly twenty houses, is endowed with only one *yado-ya* and, having arrived too late, we find the place occupied. It is a serious matter and we know not what to do. To sleep *à la belle étoile* was not in season. Ouyeno, quite a man of decision, is never embarrassed; ten seconds of reflection are sufficient to suggest to him an expedient.

"Follow me," he says.

We soon knock at the door of a good peasant, an old acquaintance of the Custom-house officer; the honest fellow, quite delighted to be useful to people of our quality, places his two rooms at the disposal of the noble travellers with the best grace in the world, and hastens eagerly to serve us.

We all drop down with fatigue and, after an improvised supper, we roll ourselves in our blankets, and seek in refreshing sleep the restoration of energy necessary to continue in the morning our curious expedition.

At six o'clock Danna-san rouses us from our slumbers. A simple but cordial expression of thanks to our host, too disinterested to accept any remuneration, discharges our obligation, and then we are again *en route*.

O-Sada, whose sterling qualities I have long recognised, proves to us by her unchangeable good-humour, by a charming and natural submission to every wish of her husband, how very sensible and well-ordered is the education of women in Japan.

There was not a complaint, not a whim, none of those uncalled-for petty, egotistic needs, the offshoots of our conventional refinements, which render travelling so difficult for the women of our country, and so often deprive us of that charming companion, without whom man, ever so full of resources, is very sensibly deficient.

Sometimes we marched on together, O-Sada trotting on so prettily in her *waradji*,* Ouyeno chatting away. Sometimes we mounted into our *kango* and, whilst admiring the curious convulsions of Nature in these volcanic regions, we listened to the stories of our friend Danna-san.

The romantic adventure of O-Hana recalled to his memory the romance of Kosan and Kingoro. This narrative, full of touching incidents, forcibly recalls the *Dame aux Camélias* of Alexandre Dumas *filz*; it is the most characteristic specimen of Japanese literature.

I regret not having noted down the same evening in my book the names of all the actors in this drama, with many details full of interest. I could thus have given a more exact and fuller summary.

The story begins, if I remember rightly, at Kamakoura.

"Kingoro, a young man of an honourable family, loves a young girl named Kosan, his sister by adoption. The father, a widower since the birth of his son, is happy to sanction a marriage desired by his children, and the betrothing is

* Japanese shoes.

celebrated. Meanwhile, a rich union is proposed to him for his son, and considerable advantages would accrue to the family from this alliance. What was to be done? To remove Kingoro for a certain time and, during his absence, marry Kosan to another? It would be difficult to separate the lovers. Some plausible reasons, however, are found and brought forward: the young girl has not yet attained her fifteenth year and she is frail and delicate. Kingoro, moreover, should go and serve in the guard of the daimio of the province in accordance with the law. Kingoro will therefore depart and they will await his return to celebrate the marriage.

"The day of separation arrives: Kingoro in giving a last kiss to his betrothed, swears to her fidelity and promises at the same time that she shall hear from him regularly.

"Time passes away and Kosan receives no news; she becomes restless from uneasiness and jealousy begins to eat into her heart. Her adopted father persuades her to forget the perjurer and to take another spouse. This is quite out of the question. One night, being unable to live any longer in this way, she quits the house of her childhood; she sets out barefooted, without money and without a protector, in search of her affianced lover. But where will she go? Where the *Kami* will conduct her; she starts on an adventure, for the residence of Kingoro is unknown to her.

"Impelled by her love and led by a sort of instinct towards the capital, Kosan takes the route to Yedo. She marches—marches without inter-

mission, without even thinking of repose. The second night after her departure, just as she leaves Kanagawa, brigands suddenly rush on her, drag her along, treat her with violence, and carry her away with them.

"Kingoro, informed shortly after of the departure of his mistress, returns to Kamakoura, in order to trace her course from the point of departure. On his arrival, he is informed that the unfortunate girl has drowned herself in the river.

"Plunged into the deepest despair, the sad young man vegetates for several months; then beset by his father, who wilfully deceived him, he demands leave to quit his lord's service and gets married.

"After long wandering, poor Kosan ends by recovering her liberty. To re-enter her adopted father's house is impossible, and to continue the search for her faithless lover seems to her now a task beyond her strength. In short, she must live. The unfortunate creature reaches Yedo,* becomes a *guécha*, hires a little chamber at Voiso, and goes in the evenings to sing and play on the *chamice*n in the houses where she is demanded.

"One evening, while accompanying a *chibai-ya* in a house of ill-fame, Kingoro, led by some friends into these places of pleasure, recognises her.

"The young man cannot believe the evidence of his senses.

* The events of this story really took place at Kamakoura, but the narrator has transported the scene to Yedo.

“‘Thou here!’ said he to her; ‘thou in this debauchery! May the sky fall on thy head and crush thee, perfidious one! What perverse instinct, what shameful passion has led thee to such a stage of debasement? Thou, my betrothed, thou art fallen low indeed to sell thy songs at such a vile price; thou must have debased thyself enough in thine own eyes to dare to appear in public in the garments of a lost woman!’

“‘Ah! I understand!’ he continued, ‘thou hadst sworn to me fidelity, but thy promise was a burden to thee. I had not gone ten *ri* when thou hadst already in thy heart another love. Faithless one, thou hast deceived me, but the gods in their justice are avengers in causing thee to be betrayed in thy turn. Is it not true, that thou art abandoned? Thy ravisher has left thee as one leaves a courtesan.’

“Poor Kosan wept bitterly.

“‘Yes,’ she said, ‘I have been abandoned, I have been betrayed, but it is by thee, trothless one; by thee, who hadst promised to write to me and hast not kept thy promise; by thee, to whom I had given all my love.’

“Kosan then relates to her friend all her misfortunes. Kingoro at last is deeply moved, falls at the knees of his well-beloved, entreats pardon for his unjust suspicions and leads her away to his *yasiki*.

“The sequel is readily foreseen. Kosan becomes the mistress of the *samourai*. The most complete concord dwells in the house; the most

ideal love steadfastly unites the lovers, and from this union a son is born—a darling *mous'ko*.

"It is a great joy—a happiness of halcyon days. A cloud, however, comes at length to trouble this serene sky.

"One day, Kingoro had gone out from his *yasiki* of Yanagnibashi on some matters of business. Kosan was alone and occupied in the duties of the household; the young *mous'ko* was frolicking on the *tatami*, when a stranger, an old man of respectable appearance, presented himself.

"'I wish to speak to Kingoro,' he said.

"'He is absent,' Kosan replied.

"'Then if you will allow me, I will wait for him. I come from afar, and am very tired.'

"The young woman, prepossessed by the kind look of the old man, is eager in attending on him. She orders hot water for his bath, offers him tea, cakes and *saké*, and asks him if he has everything he wishes. The young *mous'ko* brings the box of tobacco, the *kicero*,* and the *tchibatchi*.

"At the sight of the child the old man becomes uneasy.

"'It is Kingoro's son?' he asks.

"'Yes,' replies Kosan; 'it is our child.'

"Tears were running down the traveller's cheeks.

"'Are you unwell?' anxiously demands the young woman.

"'No, dear child, my heart bounds with joy on beholding my great-grandson, and I am

* A little pipe in metal which the Japanese use.

grieved to think that I cannot call you my daughter.'

"Kosan then falls at the old man's feet.

"'Yes,' continued the latter, 'I am Kingoro's grandfather, and we are plunged into the greatest grief through his conduct. Being unable to bear his desertion, I have taken the course to come myself for the heartless child. I want to lead him back to the path of duty.

"'On coming here • my heart was deeply wounded and full of unkind sentiments towards you, but my anger has vanished in your presence. Kosan, you are a good woman, worthy of the respect of every one. I wish I could take you into my *yasiki*, but I cannot do so at present; later, we shall be able to arrange everything and, believe me, happy days will be in store for you. I am going away now, but I rely on you to persuade Kingoro to come and join me. Use your influence with him, restore a son to a desolate father, a husband to a wife, and the *Kami* will reward you for the good act.'

"These last words are a revelation. Kingoro was married, and Kosan was ignorant of it. This news, announced without preparation, without preamble, is for her a mortal blow. . . . She totters, loses for a moment all feeling of existence, then suddenly she stands up, pale and trembling:

"'Go away in peace,' she says to the grandfather of Kingoro, 'to-morrow your grandson will enter the conjugal home.'

"A terrible struggle rages in the young woman's breast between the sentiment of duty, her love, and the cruel jealousy which is now lacerating her heart.

"'I will see the monster no more; he has deceived me. But never will he consent to quit me for a single day. And yet I must break this ignominious tie, and he must be restored to his family. My honour has been appealed to, and I shall not fail. I will put an end to my life, and Kingoro will be free.'

"From the moment this resolution is taken it is mournfully curious to assist at the preparations of this unhappy woman, condemned by her conscience to die for her lover. The most harrowing details are given by the Japanese author, with that precision, that fulness, that minute realism, which characterises all Eastern writers and especially those of the 'Empire of the Rising Sun.'

"Before carrying into execution her fatal project, Kosan writes a last adieu to him to whom she has sacrificed her days without hesitation; then taking her son by the hand, she goes her way slowly towards Moukoozima, where her sister lives.

"'You look careworn,' the latter says.

"'No,' replies Kosan, making efforts to smile; 'it is nothing. I have merely a slight headache.'

"The child plays between the laps of the two women.

"'I bring thy nephew to thee,' Kosan says to

her sister ; 'keep him till to-morrow. I have a little journey to make.'

"The *mous'ko* throws himself into his mother's arms and will accompany her. It is heartrending.

"At last they separate. Kosan returns home, and so soon as the courageous woman finds herself alone, she seizes a poniard and plunges it into her throat, murmuring the names of her son and her lover.

"Kingoro enters a few minutes afterwards. He sees his mistress bathed in her blood. He throws himself on her inanimate body, embraces her in his arms and kisses with frenzy her cheeks already pale in death.

"Kosan opens again her eyes, but can speak no more. With a gesture she points to a letter to her lover. He reads :

" 'Thou must return to thy family,' she says to him ; 'living, thou wouldst not have abandoned me ; dead, thou wilt forget me, perhaps. I die willingly. Adieu.'

" 'Dead or living, I am thine for ever,' cries Kingoro. 'I will no more abandon thy cherished remains than I have abandoned thy body beaming with life and beauty.'

"Saying this, he threw himself again on the body of his expiring mistress, and fell inanimate."

It is impossible to give in this summary any idea of the sweet poesy of the original. Ouyeno, in his simple language, interested and moved us deeply. More than once I felt a tear trickling down my cheek, and I often saw Marcel raising his handkerchief. As to O-Sada—who had per-

haps read a dozen times the story of Kosan and Kingoro, and who, no doubt, had heard it recited many times—she actually sobbed in her *kango*.

This romance is one of the most popular of Japan, and known almost as well as the legend of Koma-ti. It has for me the merit of being stamped with a realism less coarse than usual, preserving at the same time that impress, that perfume of truth, so much loved by the Japanese.

From Inashi to Subashiri the road, for a distance of eight or ten miles, seems like a well-kept avenue of a vast park. Running continually on a plain, it enters every moment little green woods redolent with perfume, passes over miniature bridges and endless brooks, whose limpid waters furnish a deliciously refreshing bath to the traveller, and traverses a hundred villages, which appear to rival one another for cleanliness and fanciful picturesqueness.

After having crossed the Tôkardô, abandoned last evening and found again to-day, we meet first with Yotembo, then Subanota, and finally many others which I remember well, but not their names.

At half-past nine we arrive at Subashiri. Here the aspect of the country changes completely—trees become scarce, and we begin to recognise those convulsions of nature in the neighbourhood of volcanoes. Before advancing further into it we think it advisable to take some precautions for a three days' march into a kind of desert.

It will be well, they tell us, to carry some water

and a little wood. At this time of the year tourists become rare, and the mountain *tcha-ya* are already abandoned. If you happen to find shelter in inhabited houses, you are far from being sure of finding as well the most necessary things to existence.

Ouyeno, like a prudent man, fills two *kango*, one with wood cut up into bits, and the other with divers objects, among which is a little cask of water, some *f'ton* and *mosen* in sufficient quantity to lie on and cover us.

The necessity of this last precaution makes itself sensibly felt as soon as the sun commences to sink into the horizon, the temperature descending with remarkable rapidity in proportion as we advance into the elevated regions.

This journey, which is to take us very near our destination, is excessively fatiguing. After nine hours' marching on a mountain road, where one sinks eight inches into lava dust mixed with large stones, we arrive exhausted at Gongo, and here we pass the night.

As they had told us at Subashiri, we find the place a desert. The two or three *tcha-ya*, scattered in this rocky spot, are quite empty. To open the most comfortable and the most worthy to lodge ourselves therein is but the work of a moment.

Our *ninsokou* * bring out the provisions, the blankets, the *f'ton*, the *mosen*, and, in fact, all our riches.

Whilst O-Sada, aided by Marcel, busies herself with lighting the fire and in arranging the con-

* Porters.

veniences, I take a turn, in company with Ouyeno, in the environs. All the houses around are uninhabited; here and there some vestiges prove that the inmates have recently left, but there are no other traces of a living creature.

The sun has just disappeared, and the temperature, singularly lower than yesterday, falls suddenly two more degrees. Feeling the great need of a cloak, we hurry on to regain our shelter.

We find everything ready; the bedroom laid out with the beds, and the repast served up.

Oh! how quickly and how well we recognise the presence of woman in the household! How much one feels the sweet influence of the fairy of the domestic hearth, whose magic ring has power to embellish the most simple and ordinary object! O-Sada, feeling herself here again mistress of the house in this barrack open to all comers, does the honours of the place with the most finished ease and grace.

The state of the atmosphere and the advanced hour of the day does not induce us to take a stroll; therefore, while the rice is cooking, we get around the *tchibatchi*; then, while waiting for bed-time, we sup, talk, and smoke. Each relates his story and makes his proposals for to-morrow; it is agreed that we shall sleep as long as possible, in order to restore our strength and give the sun time to illumine the scenery; at nine o'clock, following the example of our gentle companion, each slips quietly and unobserved into his *f'ton*, disposed around the only chamber of the house.

We feel draughts penetrating every corner of our dilapidated dwelling; but, thanks to the many *mosen* hired at Subashiri, we pass an excellent night. In the morning, however, it is impossible to protect ourselves thoroughly from the cold; therefore, notwithstanding the plan adopted last evening to repose late, we all get up at seven, and are soon ready to scale the last steps of the sacred mountain.

The thermometer marks at this moment two degrees above freezing-point, Centigrade.

Four *ninsokou* are placed to guard the baggage; the others accompany us to carry provisions and help us if required.

The ascent is rough and we are obliged to stop frequently to take breath. The aspect of the country has again changed; the region of lava dust and rolling stones has given place for the last hour to the region of dry and barren lava; the foot slips and the shoe frays on these rugged crests still untrodden by visitors.

Marcel, who is in advance of us, now about eleven o'clock, calls out, "I am there." He stands on the highest point commanding the crater.

It is not without a certain emotion that we arrive at these summits; one fancies he has conquered for himself a small portion of the supernatural associated with the mountain of mountains. The crater is there gaping wide, and the monster's throat, that has been vomiting for centuries boiling water and burning lava, seems to be awaiting a last convulsion, a final gasp to close for ever.

It is a vast funnel, five hundred feet deep by about thirteen hundred feet in diameter.

The adventurous Breton was most anxious to make an excursion into the gulf, but simply for the satisfaction of being able to say in future, "I went down into the crater of Fousi-yama," he might break his back or at least a leg. Such vain-glory is certainly an insufficient motive for undertaking the risk of the enterprise.

Leaving therefore to others the honour of executing this hazardous feat, we are satisfied with looking on. Perched on the most elevated spot of the empire we overlook boundless space and, if we were furnished with instruments of sufficient power, the eye might reach the extreme limits of the Japanese Archipelago.

The native geographers have executed a very fine map, but a little fantastic, of what is called the thirteen provinces which may be perceived from the top of Fousi-yama. It is a good joke, for no lynx eye, however pure the atmosphere might be, could span such distances.

The air is very sharp, one degree below freezing-point at this altitude, and the cold would speedily become intolerable if we did not keep in movement.

A terrestrial ocean undulates at our feet as far as we can see, where its horizon and the sky blend in confusion. It is fantastic; the charmed vision discovers far away infinite wonders. Suddenly the scene changes; gray mists form in the lowest hollows, spread along the plain encroaching every-

where, then rise and close around us with narrowing circles. Thick clouds now invade the space, constituting a penetrating fog that will soon be transformed into snow and furnish the winter dress of the slumbering volcano.

We are obliged to hasten away unless we would be changed into icicles.

The descent, though quite as laborious as the ascent, is effected with more speed. The *ninsokou* go on before to warn their comrades of our approach and to ensure their being ready to start as soon as we reach Gongo. We shall thus be able, perhaps, to arrive at Subashiri before night.

At two o'clock we quit Gongo, resuming the road of an inhabited region and, at nine in the evening, we are at Subashiri. The next day about the same hour, after having crossed the lake of Hakoné, we are set down at the door of a *yado-ya* recommended to Ouyeno as being one of the most comfortable of the country.

CHAPTER XXVI.

FAREWELL INTERVIEW WITH O-HANA.

Hakoné and its Scenery—Reconnoitring the Retreat of the Fugitive—The Unexpected Visit and its Consequences—We follow Ouyeno's Counsel—Departure from Japan.

OUYENO knew Hakoné; he had come here the year of his marriage with his young bride to pass in this Eden the first days of his honeymoon; he had therefore no trouble to find out the residence of Shobé-san.

When O-Sada had gone to bed we went out to reconnoitre the place in order that we might alight with certainty on the house the next morning, surprise O-Hana, and bear to her her pardon.

It was on the borders of the lake, not very far from our *yado-ya*. It was about six in the evening; a brilliant moon, like the sun of the north, lighted up every nook and corner of the lake and the charming habitations rising within a short distance of its shores.

The coolness of the air had already disposed the inmates to close their doors, but light from

within penetrated through the transparent squares of paper of the windows. They had not yet gone to bed in these cheerful dwellings, and the shrill notes of the *chamiceu* were mingling with the soothing harmonies of this silvery night.

We had just arrived in face of a little villa whose appearance corresponded with the description given to Ouyeno of the *yasiki* of Shobé-san. We were looking for some wayfarer, some one passing by, to inform us positively as to the occupant, but waited in vain, and the cold gaining on us in our standing position, we were going to return, when a well-known voice, fresh and sweet, the voice of a young girl, fell on our ears. Marcel was seized with a trembling.

"It is she; it is O-Hana," he said in a nervous voice, squeezing my arm.

"Listen," said Ouyeno, "I will interpret to you what she is singing if you do not understand it."

O-Hana, as many of the Japanese do, was singing *à l'improviste*, accompanying herself on her favourite instrument. The young creature was exhaling in natural language the sufferings of her wounded soul. She was pouring out in this way a flood of simple and charming poesy, full of candour and purity, the overflowing of a desponding heart:

"It was darkness in my soul and my heart was slumbering. He came and woke me. Then it was day, a sudden and divine brightness lighted up all my being. I felt transfigured, I found myself taller, finer, and more airy. The soft warmth of

his love filled me with life. I loved him. Oh, joy! Celestial frenzy! He loved me!

"Alas! alas! one day, a day of grief, he left. A night terrible closed around me. I felt I was dying, but I became only mad.

"For him I have left my country, my mother, my old and tender father. I have crossed the seas, and I have seen him again but a moment. Why? My God! Because they told me yonder: Go back, in staying thou killest thy father.

"And I set out to return. But I would give my life to-day to see him again one minute, a single minute, *him*, the prince of my heart."

At this instant the door opened; we stepped aside and crossed the road. The voice was hushed; a servant came to close the outer shutters. From the place where we stood, ensconced in the shade, we could, without being observed, see what was going on in the interior.

The family had, no doubt, retired to the chambers on the first storey. O-Hana was alone, squatting beside the *tchibatchi* and, having laid the *chamiceu* on her knee with her hands resting lightly on the instrument, her head slightly thrown back, she seemed lost in deep reverie. Her features, sharpened by grief, bore the impress of a tender melancholy; her eyes, surrounded with dark circles, betrayed sleeplessness and weeping. Nothing was more startling than this sudden apparition.

This tableau, and its surroundings, by the impressive contrast, stirred the feelings and excited the imagination.

Without, nothing could be more calm, more heavenly serene. Everything was reposing in stillness; the silvery moon and the starry firmament glittered in reflection from the placid waters of the blue lake unruffled even by a breeze. Within, was this lonely, heart-broken girl pouring out in secret all her trouble—a sorrow without a gleam of hope and peace on earth.

Marcel for some moments dissimulated no longer his emotion; it was now beyond his control.

“O-Hana!” he cried, rushing towards the door.

I held him back in time to prevent him from presenting himself too abruptly.

The young girl, on hearing her name pronounced by a loved voice, trembled from head to foot.

“Who calls me?” she murmured, as if speaking to herself. Then passing her hand before her eyes with the gesture of one trying to overcome sleep:

“Ever,” she added, “ever the same illusion coming to trouble me, in giving me a joy followed by the most bitter deception.” She then fell back exhausted.

“Can we bear to let her suffer like this till the morning?” I said in a hoarse voice to my companions.

“Oh, no,” murmured Marcel.

It was necessary to obey Danna-san, our guide and mentor on this occasion. Ouyeno was touched. Contrary to my expectation, he yielded to our wishes without a word.

Go,” said he, “in obedience to your heart.”

"O-Hana!" cried Marcel again.

The young girl bounded to the door.

"They call me this time. I am not dreaming. Hast thou heard, Koarou?"

"Yes, *mous'mé-san*, twice they have pronounced your name."

During this colloquy we had come up close to the *yasiki*. The servant, frightened at seeing three men with suspicious movements, ran back hurriedly in her terror.

Marcel, who stood in advance, stepped into that part of the road lighted by the lanterns from the house, and stopped in the centre of the doorway. O-Hana, informed by the *né-san*, looked in this direction. She uttered a loud cry and fell backwards.

At the risk of being taken for thieves, we rushed in to the succour of the poor girl. Ouyeno, full of tender feeling for his sister-in-law, was the first to come up. With one word he reassured the servant, telling her to call Shobé, and quickly helped us to reanimate the fainting girl.

The whole family came down in disorder. They soon recognised the situation; but before entering into explanations we continued our attention to the patient. The syncope persisted in spite of the energetic measures taken on such occasions; iced compress on the forehead and temples, penetrating perfumes to the nostrils, remained without effect.

O-Sada, who was sent for immediately, fell on her sister with kisses and tears. O-Hana still remained insensible. Her pulse was excessively

feeble and her heart was hardly beating. We began to feel seriously uneasy.

Marcel, who until then had kept back a little from discretion, but more to hide his emotion, stepped forward suddenly, and, taking the young girl's hand, seized with an irresistible impulse of tenderness, he leant towards her and embraced her with a passionate kiss on her lips.

There was no time to be abashed at this bold step, for O-Hana, under the ardent caress, yielded to it as to an electric shock. She recovered her senses, opened her eyes, pressed in both hands the head of her lover, and said to him, regardless of our presence :

"Is it indeed thou, thou, whom I adore? The *Kami* then have granted my prayer? Oh! now I can die! Yes, I say this to you all without a blush, because it is the truth of truths, and because there is no shame to tell the truth. It is to him that I have given my life, and I would say it before all the world. It is well, I am contented; I can now return to my poor father. I will tell him to his face as I tell you, I love him—I love him! But understand, I have made a vow, and this vow I shall fulfil when I have seen my father. I have promised to the *Kami* that if ever they led to me again the lord of my soul, that if ever I could say to him what I have not yet quite said, if he permitted me to divulge to him all my love—that for this moment of ineffaceable happiness I would renounce the world, the joys of earth, and I would devote the remainder of my existence to prayers and tears in

order to redeem my fault. My prayer has been granted. In a week I shall be an *ama*.* I shall have my head shaved, and you will hear no more of the sad O-Hana who has caused you so much trouble, so much anxiety and grief."

After this public confession, made with feverish excitement, the poor creature swooned away again. They laid her down on layers of *futon* and bestowed on her the most anxious attention and tender care. Then, after a short interval, she recovered and began to talk calmly.

Marcel, disconcerted and bewildered, kept himself timidly in a corner. His position was very embarrassing. It was impossible for him to reply to the ardent declarations of the young girl in the presence of everybody; but, on a sign, an imperceptible appeal, he approached the agitated girl and said to her in French that he might not be understood by every one:

"O-Hana, *ma bien-aimée* . . ."

Then lowering again his voice, he murmured a few words which we did not hear.

O-Hana's face was radiant with joy.

"Thank you," she said. "Thy word overloads me with happiness; but it is no longer possible. I have promised to renounce the world, and I will keep my promise. Thy remembrance will live eternally in me: this will be my consolation. Adieu."

The night had advanced, and to remain longer

* A nun, a bonzess.

would be abusing the hospitality. We therefore retired, leaving O-Sada with her sister.

On our way back, Ouyeno was very deep in thought. Marcel, equally absorbed, kept silent.

"I should never have believed so much passion could exist in this child," said Danna-san. "I had always treated her like a little girl, and I discover a burning furnace. Poor father Mitani! what will become of him without his daughter?"

"But it is not an irrevocable determination," I ventured to suggest.

"You don't know the nature of my sister-in-law."

"I know her to be resolute. She has proved that."

"Yes, and in all sincerity, in spite of her singular course of conduct. She has promised, and she will hold to her promise."

"What must we do, then?"

"You must go away first," said the brother-in-law of the future nun to Marcel, "and leave to us the only possible chance of turning O-Hana from her decision. She is hardly sixteen, and her enthusiasm will subside. You will pass on to the stage of remembrance, agreeable, no doubt; but at the stage of remembrance it is much less dangerous than at the stage of reality. And then, instead of a religious fanatic, we shall have perhaps a good little woman who will become again Japanese after an imaginary and poetic excursion in Europe. You would not exact everlasting regrets, would you? You would not be one jot

the happier for it if the poor girl could find no consolation for her lifetime.

"Then let me do everything. Go away both of you without us. Inform Mitani of our early return, without telling him everything. I will prepare him for it gradually. Your recall to France is soon expected, you have told me. Very well, we will wait here, if needed, until you have quitted Yokohama before returning there ourselves, and I will answer for this little madcap, for whom the *Kami* have in reserve many days of joy and happiness.

"Adieu! But do not forget when you are in your country of France, so vaunted, do not forget that you have somewhere, almost at the antipodes, some good and sincere friends who love you and will never forget you."

I felt my eyes moistening under the influence of a strong emotion. Who would ever have suspected so much heart, so much delicacy and good sense under the ridiculous exterior of this self-conceited Ouyeno?

Marcel, in spite of his bitter grief at seeing no more his tender and sweet "flower," readily complied with the reasoning of the Custom-house officer. The day was beginning to break, it was useless to go to bed, we therefore took our departure.

The evening of the following day we arrived at Yokohama. On passing before Mitani's shop we alighted.

"Everything is going on well, father Mitani,"

I said. "O-Hana is found again, and in a few days she will be here. Her sister and brother-in-law wish to remain a few days longer with her yonder."

"Thank you, thank you, my dear friends," said the good old man, handing me a letter.

It was a word from our lieutenant.

"If you arrive at Yokohama this evening," he wrote, "do not defer till to-morrow your coming on board. The order for departure has arrived."

"Send word to your son-in-law," I said to old Mitani, "that he can return with his friends. We are going to leave."

"Already!" exclaimed Marcel:

"Already? What folly! After three years' absence——"

"Ah! Yes, already!"

Thus life passes away, and thus do we habitually regard it. The minutes, which are but infinitesimal parts of eternity, seem sometimes as if they would never end; the days are often centuries, the months years, and yet the years succeed one another with a rapidity that astonishes. If we stop to reflect a moment, the events of ten years ago seem to us like a dream of yesterday.

As they were waiting only for the "Japanese brothers" to come aboard, at daybreak we said adieu to Yokohama, perhaps for ever. The steam helping the wind, we left the port behind us rapidly.

Marcel, with his elbows resting on the barri-

cading, regarded in deep abstraction the retreating shores of the charming country of the daimios. The green mammillated hills disappeared one after the other in the rosy haze of the morning. I drew near my friend: he pressed my hand; then as I respected his meditation in silence:

"Come now," he said, "it is all over. Poor O-Hana!"

And he left me with a light step to take the watch on the foot-bridge.

"Ah! poor O-Hana," I thought to myself on seeing Marcel so calm, "thy love must have fallen on a lump of ice! What thou hadst fondly believed to be a return, could it have been merely a pale reflection of thy sentiments in a cold, metallic mirror? Has not this transitory radiance been borrowed from thy own flame?"

The imperturbable officer of the chronometers, armed with his sextant, was intent on catching the sun. Kerlaradec, his faithful helmsman, counted and recounted the long lines of figures, and not a muscle moved on the placid countenance of the lover of the day before yesterday. I could not get over it. I was almost shocked. When the watch was near over I went up and leaned on the rail of the foot-bridge, waiting for my friend to administer to him a sound lecturing. Our commander, accustomed to the rigorous exactitude of his chronometer officer, came up and marked his position mechanically on the chart. A violent exclamation made me turn

round. The commander, not knowing whether to laugh or to frown, cried out :

"Monsieur Marcel, where the deuce have you got your head? What! it is here is it that you place us? But be kind enough to look about you. We are ten miles over the land!"

Marcel lowered his head, and I understood it in a moment. In spite of his calm and serious look, Marcel in making his calculations had his thoughts wandering elsewhere. I took his hand.

"I have wronged you," I said, "for the last two hours. Forgive me, poor Marcel!"

The return voyage was as rapid as the outward one had been slow. Two months later, we come in sight of our native land and, as we pass under La Peirrière again, we see on the headland groups of anxious and joyful faces assembled to greet our return.

THE END.

